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In this issue

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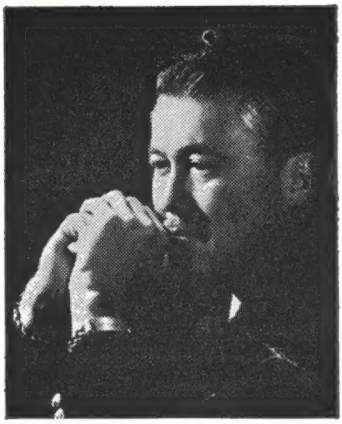
LESLIE CHARTERIS

WATCH FOR The saint ON TV

adventure of the spurious tamerlane

A New Story by AUGUST DERLETH

SOME OLD, SOME NEW — THE FINEST IN MYSTERY FICTION



For at least the first 28 volumes of the Saint Saga, Simon Templar was a smoker of incinerative intensity. Over and over again, through those stories, you will find variations on the description of cigarettes "slanted between mocking lips", of smoke being "drawn deep into his lungs" and exhaled to "drift lazily past his reckless blue eyes", or similar phrases. Moments of high drama or suspense were punctuated by the lighting of cigarettes with a regularity which should have earned me a grateful subsidy from the tobacco industry (but never did); and his most typical gestures were orchestrated with the manipulation of cigarettes, cigarette cases, matches and lighters, and the resulting incense.

The reason was not only that these operations provided convenient bits of business to pace or point up the action, but that as a chain smoker of prodigious persistence myself, I was performing similar movements while I was choosing and arranging the words, and so it was almost impossible for me to conceive of any scene without a cigarette *obbligato.*

Some 11 or 12 years ago, when wishful obduracy would no longer let me laugh off the overwhelming evidence that smokers have about 25 times the probability of ending up with lung cancer than non-smokers, and I decided that these were no kind of odds to buck, the Saint went on smoking for a long time after I quit, partly because I did not want to make such an abrupt change in his image, and partly because I still found it hard, on paper, to dispense with those graphic pauses and punctuations which the rituals of smoking offer so generously to an author who is stuck for a descriptive line to interrupt a lengthy exchange of dialog. But inevitably, as smoking became more remote from my own actions and impulses, even in retrospect, I began to think less and less of the Saint in patterns of smoking, until the mere cliché of having him light a cigarette began to seem forced and artificial.

Thus Simon progressively smoked less and less, in print. I was rather surprised at first that nobody seemed to notice it. I became aware that I had actually written an entire short story in which the Saint never touched a cigarette, and not one faithful reader pin-pointed this lapse from orthodoxy.

Finally, last year, in a story called *The Hopeless Heiress,* I took the bull by the horns by having a character comment, when the Saint opens a pack of cigarettes for the first time in that story: "I haven't seen you smoking before." And Simon, who has gone through the motion actually to cover another move, and puts the package down without taking a cigarette, explains: "I'm trying to quit." Still not one reader commented.

Perhaps the Saint's loyal followers are not quite so observant as I had hitherto believed. But one day, no doubt, some student will devote a learned monograph to this radical change in Simon Templar's habits. I am now encouraged to go the rest of the way, and let him stop smoking altogether. I can hardly let my hero continue with a vice which I now think conspicuously stupid. So, for posterity, let this be the documentation.

Leslie Charteris

The® saint
MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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the man who looked at fish

by Leslie Charteris

I USED TO SEE the old man every day around Bill Thompson's place, down at Marathon, in the Florida Keys. He was almost a part of the scenery, like the mangrove islands off shore or the pelicans that wheeled lazily back and forth and sat out on the sand bar at low tide. He didn't keep much busier than they did, either. Sometimes he'd cart off a load of trash, or trundle a barrow-load of ice out to one of the boats. But mostly he'd just be standing or sitting around on the pier or beside the pool, staring into the water.

I couldn't have guessed just how old he actually was. His rather shapeless figure, in patched and faded khaki dungarees, didn't have either the corpulence or emaciation of decay, and his slouch suggested laziness or relaxation rather than decrepitude: when he had to, he could move about as well as anyone. But he could have passed for anything from 55 to 90.

He didn't talk much to anyone unless he had to. But when I

Since I decided to concentrate on building up the Saint, I don't think I have written half a dozen stories without him. And of these, since one of my objectives was to get away from the theme of crime and give myself a change, this is the only one which could by any stretch of imagination be reprinted in this Magazine. The required stretch is still considerable; but it does, nevertheless, contain a Mystery . . . L.C.

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passed him I would give him a friendly time of day, and he would always respond cordially enough. Then he would go back to staring down at the water.

It's usually pretty clear in the bay, and when it's calm you can see small fish cruising about on their aimless errands, and sometimes a conch clawing its laborious way over the bottom under its heavy shell. I looked down with the old man a couple of times, but that was about all I could see.

Once I asked him if he was looking at anything special I was missing.

"No, sir," he said pleasantly. "Just lookin' at the fish."

He didn't seem disposed to enlarge on the subject, so I left it at that. I've heard of bird watching, which has always struck me as a slightly eccentric but harmless pastime, so I figured there might be fish watchers too.

Next time I saw him at it, I said: "How are the fish today?"

"Fine," he said imperturbably; which was as courteous as reply as you could expect to a rather silly question.

I stood beside him for a while and looked at the fish with him. After a long while he seemed to thaw out a little in the encouraging climate of my silence.

"People could learn a lot by lookin' at fish, 'stead of talkin' about 'em so much," he volunteered. "I been watchin' 'em all my life. Started when I used to fish for a living. Figured if I watched 'em enough — how they moved about, how they et, what kind of things interested 'em — I'd know better 'n anybody how to chatch 'em. I did, too. Now I just watch 'em," he concluded.

Later, I was down at the cleaning table on the dock, starting to scale a nice four-pound red snapper we'd caught that afternoon, when the old man came by. A lot of the scales were flying into the water as I scraped them off, and the mullet and needle-fish were having a field day, darting and leaping for them like kids in a shower of popcorn. The old man stood by my elbow and watched them for quite a while.

"That's a fair enough little fish you got," he said at last, nodding at the one I was cleaning. "How'd you take him?"

"Spinning."

"They been comin' in with the wells full all day," he said. "Kingfish, mostly. That all you got?"

"This is all we brought home," I said. "We had a lot of sport with a whole flock of kings, but they were all too big for just my wife and me to eat, so we turned 'em loose. We aren't greedy, and this one looked just right for dinner."

I could feel something transmitted from him almost like a

gentle glow, a warmth quite different from the ordinary politeness.

"It's a pity more folks don't think like that," he said presently. "I've seen 'em come in with more fish than they an' all their friends could eat, and seen 'em throw it away. I've seen 'em kill tarpon, even, which nobody can eat an' which wasn't anything like big enough to try for a record, even, an' bring 'em in just to have their pictures taken with it."

"My wife and I only fish for fun," I said, being perfectly truthful but trying not to sound smug about it. "We just enjoy playing with them and eating one occasionally."

"I eat 'em too," he said matter-of-factly. "They're good food."

I rinsed off the fillets I had cut from the two sides of the snapper and set them aside, and I was just starting to clean off the table when he put out his hand and picked up the strips I had trimmed from the back and the belly, with the fins and the small bones in.

"May I have these?" he asked.

It hadn't occurred to me that he might be hungry, but I had never asked what he lived on.

"Here," I said, "these fillets are quite big, and we aren't big eaters. Why don't you take one of them?"

"No," he said, "I was just going to feed the bonefish."

In Bill Thompson's swimming pool, which is nothing but a big hollow blasted out of the coral rock in front of the cottages, where anybody can swim without being nervous about being mistaken for a free lunch counter by some stray barracuda, there are a lot of fish, which have been caught and dumped there alive by various contributors, and which live there in a sort of natural aquarium, quite happily, since they are walled in by a ring of fill and the water changes with every tide. Among them are three bonefish, which any angler will tell you is the fastest and spookiest thing with fins; but these three have become so domesticated and used to people that they just cruise up and down the shallows along the shore and look up at you beguilingly like spoiled puppies hoping for a handout.

I walked over to the pool with the old man and watched him feed the bonefish. He broke the trimmings up with his fingers and threw them carefully, aiming them so that the fish had to keep racing for them. Sometimes he chewed a small piece himself.

"See how they swim?" he said.

"Just like fish," I said.

"That's the only way to swim," he said. "Most everybody these days thinks he can

swim, but they don't know nothin' about it. Like you. You think you swim pretty good. I've watched you."

"Oh, I just get along," I said rather huffily.

"You don't know the first thing about it," he said dispassionately. "No more 'n anybody else. I see 'em all splashin' about, kickin' an' trashin' like big overgrown beetles. All the fish must look at 'em an' laugh fit to split their sides."

"Well," I said, hoisting my fillets, "I'm going to run along and have the last laugh on this one, anyway."

I went into our cottage and found Audrey already clean and shining like a schoolgirl, the way she always looks after a shower.

"I'm starved," she said. "Whatever kep you?"

"Taking a swimming lesson," I said. "The old geezer thinks I swim like a beetle. He watches fish all the time, and he knows the difference."

Picking up my mail at the office next morning, I asked Bill Thompson about him.

"Old Andrew", Bill said with a grin. "He's quite a character. Been around here ever since anyone can remember. Used to be the best fishing guide in these parts, too, once upon a time."

"What stopped him?" I asked.

"I don't really know. They say his wife took out in a skiff once to pick up some lobster traps; somehow the boat tipped over and she was drowned. She couldn't swim. Andrew went on a long drunk and never fished again. That's one story, anyway. Maybe it did have something to do with getting him touched in the head. But he's harmless. I give him a few odd jobs, and he makes enough to live on and get drunk once or twice a week. He's happy as long as he can hang around the dock and look at the fish."

Late that afternoon, Audrey, who pampers me demoralizingly, came and put her arms around my neck and insisted that I knock off the writing I had been doing and come with her for a swim.

"The water's like glass today," she said. "Let's take the snorkels."

We have a couple of French diving masks with built-in breathing tubes, which we call snorkels and which are the latest and best thing of their kind. The mask fits over the whole face, and you breathe naturally through the nose, instead of having to hold a tube in your mouth like the contraptions most skin divers are still using. You can't go down deep with them, like with an aqualung, but you can paddle around face down on the surface indefinitely, without ever having to come up for air, and look down into the water as if into an aquarium. This is al-

most our favorite pastime, and in clear warm water we can spend hours at it.

The old man was standing by the pool again, and he watched us put this gear on our heads and go in. He was still watching, after however long it was, when we came out.

"Pretty fancy helmets you got there," he remarked.

"We like them," I said — perhaps a little brusquely, because I was still ridiculously peeved about his contempt for my swimming.

"I seen spear fishermen with things like that," he said calmly. "Only not so fancy, It all comes to the same thing, I guess. Just makes it easier for 'em to go in an' kill fish."

"Is that worse than catching them on a line?" I asked.

"It is," he stated. "You catch a fish on a hook, an' he gets away, or you cut him off, the hook rusts out an' he's none the worse. A fish gets away with one o' them spears in him, an' he's goin' to die, or the other fish'll kill him, an' do no good to nobody. Then they'll go down an' spear a grouper in a hole, say, an' he thrashes around an' stirs up all the spawn that may be settin' there, an' that means a lot more little fish that ain't never goin' to be born."

"We don't really spear fish," Audrey said. "They look so pretty in the water. I just hate to see him even trying to shoot at one."

"So I gave it up," I said. "I never was much good at it, anyway. And we get as much fun out of just looking at them."

Again I felt that invisible glow that seemed to come out of him when you said something that fitted in with his ideas.

"I suppose you wouldn't let me try on one o' them things?" he said.

"Sure," I said.

I put it on for him and showed him how he had to keep his head forward so that the shut-off valve wouldn't cut off his air. He stood for a minute getting the feel of it; then, without taking off even his shirt, he walked out into the water and started swimming.

We watched for a little while, and Audrey said: "Well, you've made a friend. I'm going in and get the first shower. Don't stay all night."

She went in, and I stayed and watched the old man for a long time. He swam around very slowly and cautiously, like a frog. At last he came out and took the helmet off.

"It's mighty nice," he said.

Now that I had him weakened, I couldn't resist getting in the dig I had been saving up.

"I've been thinking," I said, working up to it, "about what you said about swimming."

"You have?" he said innocently.

"Yes," I said. "How would *you* say people ought to swim?"

"They ought to look at the fish," he said. "See how a fish swims. No flailin' around. Just a little wiggle, an' it *glides* through the water. Look at the animals that really know how to swim. Look at seals. Look at an otter. They don't swim like people. They swim like fish."

"They're also built more like a fish," I pointed out. "People have got awkward things like arms and legs, and not enough joints to wiggle with."

"All right," he said. "But they could try. Take your two arms. Make believe they're a couple of eels, an' make 'em go snake-like, like an eel swims, from your shoulders right down to your hands. An' then your legs. You could put 'em together an' try to move 'em with your body, like a fish."

I had him now.

"So," I said, trying not to make my voice too cruel, "how come you swim like a frog?"

He looked at me in silence, and I could feel he was hurt.

"You watched me," I said, "and I was watching you."

"That's why I wasn't doin' it right," he said. "I never like to swim right when anyone's watchin'."

"Oh," I said — too politely.

He went on staring at me with his clear depthless eyes.

"You don't believe me," he said. "Nobody believes me."

"Of course I do," I said uncomfortably.

He didn't have to be a clairvoyant to detect the hollowness of my words. He seemed to be fighting a great struggle within himself, but I could feel that it wasn't a struggle with ordinary indignation. He was sorry for himself, and sorry for me, and some infinitely pent-up frustration in him was stirring in what might have been a kind of death agony.

After what seemed like an age, he seemed to come to an epochal decision.

He glanced around him almost furtively, as if afraid of being seen in commission of some dread misdeed. It was getting dark already, and there was no one around. He turned away from me and walked back into the water.

He waded in up to his waist and lay forward, floating like a log. Then — it's almost impossible to describe — he gave a queer sort of fish-like wriggle, all over, and disappeared.

It must have been a trick of the fading light, but he *had* looked rather like a basking fish going down. Nothing to it really, of course: any good swimmer can duck-dive something like that.

I frowned at the area where he had vanished, expecting him to come up close by at any moment, and making a mental resolution to humor him more generally thereafter.

"Hey!!"

I turned rather stupidly. I knew it was his voice. And there he was, his gray head bobbing above the water at the far end of the pool.

I didn't literally rub my eyes, but I felt like doing it. It seemed only a few seconds since he had gone under. I knew that my thoughts had been wool-gathering, and obviously I'd simply been unaware of the lapse of time.

"Do that again," I called to him.

He flattened out and wriggled out of sight again, and this time I counted, keeping a deliberate rhythm: *Thousand-one, thousand-two, thousand-three, thousand-four.* . . .

I'd just gotten that far, meaning four seconds, when there was a swirl in the water right at my feet, and the old man stood up out of it, shaking himself like a big dog, and plodded up the crushed coral slope to face me.

"Now, you've seen it," he said. "If I die tomorrow, somebody seen it."

Without another word he trudged away into the deepening twilight, dripping water; and I went slowly into the cottage.

"Did you learn anything?" Audrey asked brightly.

"Yes," I said. "I found out I need my eyes examined. Or maybe my head."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing," I said. "The old boy can see more in fish than I can. But maybe he's the one that's cracked, and not me."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," she said mischievously; and I laughed and was glad I could turn it off, because I wasn't ready to talk about what I'd seen. Or thought I'd seen. I was afraid I actually had suffered some kind of hallucination.

It haunted me before I fell asleep, though, and again when I woke up in the morning. I could remember exactly how I'd counted the seconds, with that trick of saying "thousand" in between which helps to keep them spaced evenly: it beat in my head like a metronome. I checked it against my watch, and it came out right on the nose.

Audrey always likes to sleep a bit late when we're on vacation, so I swallowed some breakfast and went out by the pool. I knew it was a good big swimming hole, but perhaps my eye for distance was a little vague. I paced it off

carefully, from the point opposite where the old man had been when he started his last swim to the place where I knew I'd been standing. Then I shook my head and paced it over again. It came out the same.

Even if I'd faced jail for perjury, I couldn't have made it any less than fifty yards.

Fifty yards in four seconds would mean a hundred yards in eight seconds, if he could keep it up. And he hadn't seemed in the least winded when he came out.

But a hundred yards in eight seconds is a second faster than the fastest human has ever *run!*

In eight seconds, a hundred yards, that's three hundred feet, that's thirty-seven-and-a-half feet a second. Sixty miles an hour is eighty-eight feet a second (I remembered that without having to work it out, from a story I'd written involving an automobile accident). Eighty-eight into thirty-seven gives you a little more that forty percent, meaning that his speed was better than twenty-four miles an hour. That's a good clip for a twin-engine express cruiser.

I've heard that porpoises have been timed at a speed up to seventy-five miles an hour. But a man — an *old man. . . .*

My head was swimming a little.

The old man had come up beside me from somewhere, silently. He had a handful of shrimp heads, and he was tossing them one by one to the fish.

"You ain't dreaming," he said, without taking his eyes off them. "You saw it."

"Would you do it again?" I asked.

"No."

"Haven't you ever thought," I said, trying not to disturb him with my excitement, "you could be one of the wonders of the world. You could break every swimming record that's ever been set. They'd pay you thousands of dollars to put on exhibitions. You could revolutionize the whole sport of swimming. Athletic coaches would pay you a fortune for your secrets —"

"I don't aim to make a spectacle of myself," he said. "And the only person I ever wanted to teach how to swim, just wouldn't learn."

"I heard about that," I said gently. "But somebody else might learn, and it might save his life."

"Anybody who wants to learn bad enough, can learn," he said with the stubbornness of his years. "*You* could learn, if you wanted to, and if you didn't think you knew it all already. All you have to do is forget everything they taught you, and

just watch the fish. Try to feel like a fish, an' move like a fish, 'stead of kickin' about like a drownin' cockroach, an' one day it'll just come to you, sudden an' quiet like. But I wouldn't tell nobody. Next thing you know, everybody's be out with them goldarned spears, swimming' like fish an' seein' how many they could kill."

He tossed in the last shrimp head, wiped his hands on his jeans, and stood there just looking at the bonefish cruising back and forth. I wished in vain that some inspiration would tell me how to penetrate his quiet obduracy.

"You know," he said, "folks don't give fish enough credit. What do they call somebody they're contemptuous of? A poor fish. Poor fish, my eye. Fish are a lot better off than most people. They's always got something to eat, even it it's each other, an' they don't need no money or clothes or machinery. They don't even have to worry about the weather. Down there just a few feet under it's always calm even in the worst storm, it doesn't rain or blow, it doesn't get hotter or colder. Sometimes I wonder why any creatures ever wanted to crawl up out of the water an' live on land, like evolution says they did. Sometimes I think we'd a been a lot better off improvin' our race by stayin' down under the sea. An' one o' these days, maybe some of us 'll go back to it."

"We're hardly fitted for that now," I said, to keep him talking, "unless we could get our gills back."

"What about whales an' porpoises?" he said. "They breathe air, just like we do, but they spend all their lives in the sea an' never come up on land. How do they do it? Well, they don't try to stay on the top all the time, an' wear theirselves out, like human bein's do when they're scared of drownin'. They just relax an' let 'emselves go down, an' just push 'emselves up when they want to get a breath. A lot o' folks wouldn't get drowned if they only did that. They could stay in the water all day and night if they wouldn't fight it. I know. I spent two whole summers up at Marineland, that big aquarium they got near St. Augustine, just watchin' the porpoises through the glass windows. I just about got the feel of it myself. Any day now, maybe, I'll be sure I can do it like they do. An' then I'll go out an' be with them all the time — like some other folks have, I reckon."

It was absurd, but he was so utterly earnest that a little chill riffled through my hair.

"Other folks?" I repeated.

"That's right," he said, almost

belligerently. "You ever hear of mermaids?"

"I never heard of one being caught."

"You ain't likely to. They're too smart. But they been seen."

"Manatees," I said. "That's what the old-time sailors saw, perhaps with a bottle of rum to help them. They just thought they looked human, and took it from there."

"I'm talkin' about mermaids," he said. "Not things with fish tails, but people who learned how to be like fish or porpoises. Like I aim to do; an't it won't be so long from now."

Then I knew that his poor old brain was really adrift, even if he had discovered some strange new trick about swimming; and I was almost relieved to see Audrey coming across towards us.

"Good morning," she said to him cheerfully. "Are you giving my husband some good advice?"

"I been tryin' to, ma'am," he said gravely. "But I don't think he believes me. Maybe you'll both find out, one o' these days. You're young, but you got the right things in your hearts. That's why I talked more to him than I ever talked to nobody yet. An' you" — he looked at me again — "bein' a writin' feller, perhaps one day you'll tell folks that old Andrew wasn't quite as crazy as they thought."

He tipped his cap and slouched unhurriedly away.

"What *is* the bee in his bonnet?" Audrey asked.

"It isn't a bee," I said. "It's a minnow."

And I told her all about it.

"Poor old guy," she said. "Losing his wife like that must have really done it to him. . . . But of course he couldn't actually have swam as fast as you thought he did. You must have lost count, or something."

"I must have," I said, and was glad to drop it there.

It was a dead-calm day, so we took a boat out to the ocean reef and went snorkeling there. I had never found fish so fascinating to watch.

We didn't see the old man again, but other people did, they said later. He was in every bar in town, making no trouble, just drinking steadily and not talking to anyone, but he could still walk straight when they last saw him. In the morning, they found his clothes and shoes and cap and an empty pint bottle on Bill Thompson's dock, and that was all. It seemed as if he must have gone swimming in the night, and then the liquor had overpowered him and he hadn't come back. The tide didn't bring him in, and the fishing boats kept a lookout for his body for days, but it was never found. Finally they figured

that the barracuda or the morays had probably finished it.

Audrey and I missed him around the dock, and felt strangely depressed about the manner of his going. It seemed as if he should have had a happier ending, somehow. But how could that have been possible?

It was several days later, sunning ourselves beside the pool, that we both looked at each other suddenly with the same complete telepathic agreement. Audrey jumped up and pulled on her bathing cap.

"Come on," she said. "I'll race you the length of the pool."

Audrey is slim and utterly feminine, but she can go through the water in a way that, to my chagrin, always takes my best efforts to keep up with. I still didn't have all my heart in the race at first, and about half-way she was a length ahead of me. I put my head down and started to work.

And then, somehow, I was still thinking about the old man, and thinking about the fish I'd looked at, and I could see in my mind the funny sort of wiggle the the old man had made when I watched him, and I seemed suddenly to feel it with all my body, and I was just silly enough to try it. . . .

After a moment I looked up to catch a breath and see how I was doing. This just saved me from banging my head on a rock at the end of the pool. Audrey, going like a young torpedo, was about fifteen yards behind.

When she joined me on the beach her eyes were big and round.

"Why, you old so-and-so," she sputtered. "So you've been holding out on me ever since I've know you!"

"Never," I said.

"Making believe I could almost beat you," she fumed, "when all the time you could swim like —"

"A fish," I said, and put a finger on her lips.

Sometimes we hardly seem to need to say a word to each other. It's a way two perfectly normal people can get when they've found complete harmony with each other. But she had to finalize it.

"I know it's impossible," she said, "but do you suppose . . ."

"Of course it is," I said. "But let's think it."

But we never swim like fish where anybody can see us. And very seldom even when we know we're alone. Somehow, it has us a little scared.

the pastry cook of madrigal

by Rafael Sabatini

THERE is not in all that bitter tragi-comic record of human frailty which we call History a sadder story than this of the Princess Anne, the natural daughter of the splendid Don John of Austria, natural son of the Emperor Charles V. and, so, half-brother to the bowelless King Philip II. of Spain. Never was woman born to royal or semiroyal state who was more utterly the victim of the circumstances of her birth.

Of the natural sons of princes something could be made, as witness the dazzling career of Anne's own father; but for natural daughters—and especially for one who, like herself, bore a double load of cadency—there was little use or hope. Their royal blood set them in a class apart; their bastardy denied them the wordly advantages of that spurious eminence. Their royal blood prescribed that they must mate with princes; their bastardy raised obstacles to their doing so. Therefore, since the world would seem to hold no

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worthy place for them, it was expedient to withdraw them from the world before its vanities beglamoured them, and to immure them in convents, where they might aspire with confidence to the sterile dignity of abbesshood.

Thus it befell with Anne. At the early age of six she had been sent to the Benedictine convent at Burgos, and in adolescence removed thence to the Monastery of Santa Maria la Real at Madrigal, where it was foreordained that she should take the veil. She went unwillingly. She had youth, and youth's hunger of life, and not even the repressive conditions in which she had been reared had succeeded in extinguishing her high spirit or in concealing from her the fact that she was beautiful. On the threshold of that convent which by her dread uncle's will was to be her living tomb, above whose gates her spirit may have beheld the inscription, *"Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate!"* she made her protest, called upon the bishop who accompanied her to bear witness that she did not go of her own free will.

But what she willed was a matter of no account. King Philip's was, under God's, the only will in Spain. Still, less perhaps to soften the sacrifice imposed upon her than because of what he accounted due to one of his own blood, his Catholic Majesty accorded her certain privileges unusual to members of religious communities: he granted her a little civil list—two ladies-in-waiting and two grooms—and conferred upon her the title of excellency, which she still retained even when after her hurried novitiate of a single year she had taken the veil. She submitted where to have striven would have been to have spent herself in vain; but her resignation was only of the body, and this dejected body moved mechanically through the tasks and recreations that go to make up the grey monotone of conventual existence; in which one day is as another day, one hour as another hour; in which the seasons of the year lose their significance; in which time has no purpose save for its subdivision into periods devoted to sleeping and waking, to eating and fasting, to praying and contemplating, until life loses all purposes and object, and sterilizes itself into preparation for death.

Though they might command and compel her body, her spirit remained unfettered in rebellion. Anon the claustral apathy might encompass her; in time and by slow degrees she might become absorbed into the grey spirit of the place. But that time was not

yet. For the present she must nourish her caged and starving soul with memories of glimpses caught in passing of the bright, active, stirring world without; and where memory stopped she had now beside her a companion to regale her with tales of high adventure and romantic deeds and knightly feats, which served but to feed and swell her yearnings.

This companion, Frey Miguel de Souza, was a Portuguese friar of the order of St. Augustine, a learned, courtly man who had moved in the great world and spoke with the authority of an eye-witness. And above all he loved to talk of that last romantic King of Portugal, with whom he had been intimate, that high-spirited, headstrong, gallant, fair-haired lad Sebastian, who at the age of four-and-twenty had led the disastrous overseas expedition against the Infidel, which had been shattered on the field of Alcacer-el-Kebir some fifteen years ago.

He loved to paint for her in words the dazzling knightly pageants he had seen along the quays at Lisbon, when that expedition was embarking with crusader ardour, the files of Portuguese knights and men-at-arms, the array of German and Italian mercenaries, the young king in his bright armour, bare of head—an incarnation of St. Michael—moving forward exultantly amid flowers and acclamations to take ship for Africa. And she would listen with parted lips and glistening eyes, her slim body bending forward in her eagerness to miss no word of this great epic. Anon when he came to tell of that disastrous day of Alcacer-el-Kebir, her dark, eager eyes would fill with tears. His tale of it was hardly truthful. He did not say that military incompetence and a presumptuous vanity which would listen to no counsels had been the cause of a ruin that had engulfed the chivalry of Portugal, and finally the very kingdom itself. He represented the defeat as due to the overwhelming numbers of the Infidel, and dwelt at length upon the closing scene, told her in fullest detail how Sebastian had scornfully rejected the counsels of those who urged him to fly when all was lost, how the young king, who had fought with a lion-hearted courage, unwilling to survive the day's defeat, had turned and ridden back alone into the Saracen host to fight his last fight and find a knightly death. Thereafter he was seen no more.

It was a tale she never tired of hearing, and it moved her more deeply each time she listened to it. She would ply him

with questions touching this Sebastian, who had been her cousin, concerning his ways of life, his boyhood, and his enactments, when he came to the crown of Portugal. And all that Frey Miguel de Souza told her served but to engrave more deeply upon her virgin mind the adorable image of the knightly king. Ever present in the daily thoughts of this ardent girl, his empanoplied figure haunted now her sleep, so real and vivid that her waking senses would dwell fondly upon the dream-figure as upon the memory of someone seen in actual life; likewise she treasured up the memory of the dreamwords he had uttered, words it would seem begotten of the longings of her starved and empty heart, words of a kind not calculated to bring peace to the soul of a nun professed. She was enamoured, deeply, fervently, and passionately enamoured of a myth, a mental image of a man who had been dust these fifteen years. She mourned him with a fond widow's mourning; prayed daily and nightly for the repose of his soul, and in her exaltation waited now almost impatiently for death that should unite her with him. Taking joy in the thought that she should go to him a maid, she ceased at last to resent the maidenhood that had been imposed upon her.

One day a sudden, wild thought filled her with a strange excitement.

"Is it so certain that he is dead?" she asked. "When all is said, none actually saw him die, and you tell me that the body surrendered by Mulai-Ahmed-ben-Mahomet was disfigured beyond recognition. Is it not possible that he may have survived?"

The lean, swarthy face of Frey Miguel grew pensive. He did not impatiently scorn the suggestion as she had half-feared he would.

"In Portugal," he answered slowly, "it is firmly believed that he lives, and that one day he will come, like another Redeemer, to deliver his country from the thrall of Spain."

"Then . . . then . . ."

Wistfully, he smiled. "A people will always believe what it wishes to believe."

"But you, yourself?" she pressed him.

He did not answer her at once. The cloud of thought deepened on his ascetic face. He half turned from her—they were standing in the shadow of the fretted cloisters—and his pensive eyes roamed over the wide quadrangle that was at once the convent garden and burial ground. Out there in the sunshine amid the hum of invisible but ubiquitously pulsating life,

three nuns, young and vigorous, their arms bared to the elbows, the skirts of their black habits shortened by a cincture of rope, revealing feet roughly shod in wood, were at work with spade and mattock, digging their own graves *in memento mori*. Amid the shadows of the cloisters, within sight but beyond earshot, hovered Dona Maria de Grado and Dona Luiza Nieto, the two nobly-born nuns appointed by King Philip to an office as nearly akin to that of ladies-in-waiting as claustral conditions would permit.

At length Frey Miguel seemed to resolve himself.

"Since you ask me, why should I not tell you? When I was on my way to preach the funeral oration in the Cathedral at Lisbon, as befitted one who had been Don Sebastian's preacher, I was warned by a person of eminence to have a care of what I said of Don Sebastian, for not only was he alive, but he would be secretly present at the Requiem."

He met her dilating glance, noted the quivering of her parted lips.

"But that," he added, "was fifteen years ago, and since then I have had no sign. At first I thought it possible . . . there was a story afloat that might have been true . . . But fifteen years!" He sighed, and shook his head.

"What . . . what was the story?" She was trembling from head to foot.

"On the night after the battle three horsemen rode up to the gates of the fortified coast-town of Arzilla. When the timid guard refused to open to them, they announced that one of them was King Sebastian, and so won admittance. One of the three was wrapped in a cloak, his face concealed, and his two companions were observed to show him the deference due to royalty."

"Why, then . . ." she was beginning.

"Ah, but afterwards," he interrupted her, "afterwards, when all Portugal was thrown into commotion by that tale, it was denied that King Sebastian had been among these horsemen. It was affirmed to have been no more than a ruse of those men's to gain the shelter of the city."

She questioned and cross-questioned him upon that, seeking to draw from him the admission that it was possible denial and explanation obeyed the wishes of the hidden prince.

"Yes, it is possible," he admitted at length, "and it is believed by many to be the fact. Don Sebastian was as sensitive as high-spirited. The shame of his defeat may have hung so heavily upon him that he preferred to

remain in hiding, and to sacrifice a throne of which he now felt himself unworthy. Half Portugal believes it so, and waits and hopes."

When Frey Miguel parted from her that day, he took with him the clear conviction that not in all Portugal was there a soul who hoped more fervently than she that Don Sebastian lived, or yearned more passionately to acclaim him should he show himself. And that was much to think, for the yearning of Portugal was as the yearning of the slave for freedom.

Sebastian's mother was King Philip's sister, whereby King Philip had claimed the succession, and taken possession of the throne of Portugal. Portugal writhed under the oppressive heel of that foreign rule, and Frey Miguel de Souza himself, a deeply, passionately patriotic man, had been foremost among those who had sought to liberate her. When Don Antonio, the sometime Prior of Crato, Sebastian's natural cousin, and a bold, ambitious, enterprising man, had raised the standard of revolt, the friar had been the most active of all his coadjutators. In those days Frey Miguel, who was the Provincial of his order, a man widely renowned for his learning and experience of affairs, who had been preacher to Don Sebastian and confessor to Don Antonio, had wielded a vast influence in Portugal. That influence he had unstintingly exerted on behalf of the Pretender, to whom he was profoundly devoted. After Don Antonio's army had been defeated on land by the Duke of Alba, and his fleet shattered in the Azores in 1582 by the Marquis of Santa Cruz, Frey Miguel found himself deeply compromised by his active share in the rebellion. He was arrested and suffered a long imprisonment in Spain. In the end, because he expressed repentance, and because Philip II., aware of the man's gifts and worth, desired to attach him to himself by gratitude, he was enlarged, and appointed Vicar of Santa Maria la Real, where he was now become confessor, counsellor and confidant of the Princess Anne of Austria.

But his gratitude to King Philip was not of a kind to change his nature, to extinguish his devotion to the Pretender, Don Antonio—who, restlessly ambitious, continued ceaselessly to plot abroad—or yet to abate the fervour of his patriotism. The dream of his life was ever the independence of Portugal, with a native prince upon the throne. And because of Anne's fervent hope, a hope that grew almost daily into conviction, that

Sebastian had survived and would return one day to claim his kingdom, those two at Madrigal, in that quiet eddy of the great stream of life, were drawn more closely to each other.

But as the years passed, and Anne's prayers remained unanswered and the deliverer did not come, her hopes began to fade again. Gradually she reverted to her earlier frame of mind in which all hopes were set upon a reunion with the unknown beloved in the world to come.

One evening in the spring of 1594—four years after the name of Sebastian had first passed between the priest and the princess—Frey Miguel was walking down the main street of Madrigal, a village whose every inhabitant was known to him, when he came suddenly face to face with a stranger. A stranger would in any case have drawn his attention, but there was about this man something familiar to the friar, something that stirred in him vague memories of things long forgotten. His garb of shabby black was that of a common townsman, but there was something in his air and glance, his soldierly carriage, and the tilt of his bearded chin, that belied his garb. He bore upon his person the stamp of intrepidity and assurance.

Both halted, each staring at the other, a faint smile on the lips of the stranger—who, in the fading light, might have been of any age from thirty to fifty—a puzzled frown upon the brow of the friar. Then the man swept off his broad-brimmed hat.

"God save your paternity," was his greeting.

"God save you, my son," replied Frey Miguel, still pondering him. "I seem to know you. Do I?"

The stranger laughed. "Though all the world forget, your paternity should remember me."

And then Frey Miguel sucked in his breath sharply. "My God!" he cried, and set a hand upon the fellow's shoulder, looking deeply into those bold, grey eyes. "What make you here?"

"I am a pastry-cook."

"A pastry-cook? You?"

"One must live, and it is a more honest trade than most. I was in Valladolid, when I heard that your paternity was the Vicar of the Convent here, and so for the sake of old times—of happier times—I bethought me that I might claim your paternity's support." He spoke with a careless arrogance, half-tinged with mockery.

"Assuredly . . ." began the priest, and then he checked. "Where is your shop?"

"Just down the street. Will your paternity honour me?"

Frey Miguel bowed, and together they departed.

For three days thereafter the convent saw the friar only in the celebration of the Mass. But on the morning of the fourth, he went straight from the sacristy to the parlour, and, despite the early hour, desired to see her Excellency.

"Lady," he told her, "I have great news; news that will rejoice your heart." She looked at him, and saw the feverish glitter in his sunken eyes, the hectic flush on his prominent cheekbones. "Don Sebastian lives. I have seen him."

A moment she stared at him as if she did not understand. Then she paled until her face became as white as the nun's coif upon her brow; her breath came in a faint moan, she stiffened, and swayed upon her feet, and caught at the back of a prie-dieu to steady and save herself from falling. He saw that he had blundered by his abruptness, that he had failed to gauge the full depth of her feelings for the Hidden Prince, and for a moment feared that she would swoon under the shock of the news he had so recklessly delivered.

"What do you say? Oh, what do you say?" she moaned, her eyes half-closed.

He repeated the news in more measured, careful terms, exerting all the magnetism of his will to sustain her reeling senses. Gradually she quelled the storm of her emotions.

"And you say that you have seen him? Oh!" Once more the colour suffused her cheeks, and her eyes glowed, her expression became radiant. "Where is he?"

"Here. Here in Madrigal."

"In Madrigal?" She was all amazement. "But why in Madrigal?"

"He was in Valladolid, and there heard that I—his sometime preacher and counsellor—was Vicar here at Santa Maria la Real. He came to seek me. He comes disguised, under the false name of Gabriel de Espinosa, and setting up as a pastry-cook until his term of penance shall be completed, and he shall be free to disclose himself once more to his impatiently awaiting people."

It was bewildering, intoxicating news to her. It set her mind in turmoil, made of her soul a battle-ground for mad hope and dreadful fear. This dream-prince, who for four years had been the constant companion of her thoughts, whom her exalted, ardent, imaginative, starved soul had come to love with a consuming passion, was a living reality near at hand, to be seen in the flesh by the eyes of her body. It was a thought that set her in an

ecstasy of terror, so that she dared not ask Frey Miguel to bring Don Sebastian to her. But she plied him with questions, and so elicited from him a very circumstantial story.

Sebastian, after his defeat and escape, had made a vow upon the Holy Sepulchre to lay aside the royal dignity of which he deemed that he had proved himself unworthy, and to do penance for the pride that had brought him down, by roaming the world in humble guise, earning his bread by the labour of his hands and the sweat of his brow like any common hind, until he should have purged his offence and rendered himself worthy once more to resume the estate to which he had been born.

It was a tale that moved her pity to the point of tears. It exalted her hero even beyond the eminence he had already held in her fond dreams, particularly when to that general outline were added in the days that followed details of the wanderings and sufferings of the Hidden Prince. At last, some few weeks after that first startling announcement of his presence, in the early days of August of that year 1594, Frey Miguel proposed to her the thing she most desired, yet dared not beg.

"I have told His Majesty of your attachment to his memory in all these years in which we thought him dead, and he is deeply touched. He desires your leave to come and prostrate himself at your feet."

She crimsoned from brow to chin, then paled again; her bosom heaved in tumult. Between dread and yearning she spoke a faint consent.

Next day he came, brought by Frey Miguel to the convent parlour, where her Excellency waited, her two attendant nuns discreetly in the background. Her eager, frightened eyes beheld a man of middle height, dignified of mien and carriage, dressed with extreme simplicity, yet without the shabbiness in which Frey Miguel had first discovered him.

His hair was of a light brown —the colour to which the golden locks of the boy who had sailed for Africa some fifteen year ago might well have faded—his beard of an auburn tint, and his eyes were grey. His face was handsome, and save for the colour of his eyes and the high arch of his nose presented none of the distinguishing and marring features peculiar to the House of Austria, from which Don Sebastian derived through his mother.

Hat in hand, he came forward, and went down on one knee before her.

"I am here to receive your Excellency's commands," he said.

She steadied her shuddering knees and trembling lips.

"Are you Gabriel de Espinosa, who has come to Madrigal to set up as a pastry-cook?" she asked him.

"To serve your Excellency."

"Then be welcome, though I am sure that the trade you least understand is that of a pastry-cook."

The kneeling man bowed his handsome head, and fetched a deep sigh.

"If in the past I had better understood another trade, I should not now be reduced to following this one."

She urged him now to rise, whereafter the entertainment between them was very brief on that first occasion. He departed upon a promise to come soon again, and the undertaking on her side to procure for his shop the patronage of the convent.

Thereafter it became his custom to attend the morning Mass celebrated by Frey Miguel in the convent chapel—which was open to the public—and afterwards to seek the friar in the sacristy and accompany him thence to the convent parlour, where the Princess waited, usually with one or another of her attendant nuns. These daily interviews were brief at first, but gradually they lengthened until they came to consume the hours to dinner-time, and presently even that did not suffice, and Sebastian must come again later in the day.

And as the interviews increased and lengthened, so they grew also in intimacy between the royal pair, and plans for Sebastian's future came to be discussed. She urged him to proclaim himself. His penance had been overlong already for what was really no fault at all, since it is the heart rather than the deed that Heaven judges, and his heart had been pure, his intention in making war upon the Infidel loftily pious. Diffidently he admitted that it might be so, but both he and Frey Miguel were of opinion that it would be wiser now to await the death of Philip II., which, considering his years and infirmities, could not be long delayed. Out of jealousy for his possessions, King Philip might oppose Sebastian's claims.

Meanwhile these daily visits of Espinosa's, and the long hours he spent in Anne's company gave, as was inevitable, rise to scandal, within and without the convent. She was a nun professed, interdicted from seeing any man but her confessor other than through the parlour grating, and even then not at such length or with such constancy as this. The intimacy between them—fostered

and furthered by Frey Miguel—had so ripened in a few weeks that Anne was justified in looking upon him as her saviour from the living tomb to which she had been condemned, in hoping that he would restore her to the life and liberty for which she had ever yearned by taking her to Queen when his time came to claim his own. What if she was a nun professed? Her profession had been against her will, preceded by only one year of novitiate, and she was still within the five probationary years prescribed. Therefore, in her view, her vows were revocable.

But this was a matter beyond the general consideration or knowledge, and so the scandal grew. Within the convent there was none bold enough, considering Anne's royal rank, to offer remonstrance or advice, particularly too, considering that her behavior had the sanction of Frey Miguel, the convent's spiritual adviser. But from without, from the Provincial of the Order of St. Agustine, came at last a letter to Anne, respectfully stern in tone, to inform her that the numerous visits she received from a pastry-cook were giving rise to talk, for which it would be wise to cease to give occasion. That recommendation scored her proud, sensitive soul with shame. She sent her servant Roderos at once to fetch Frey Miguel, and placed the letter in his hands.

The friar's dark eyes scanned it and grew troubled.

"It was to have been feared," he said, and sighed. "There is but one remedy, lest worse follow and all be ruined. Don Sebastian must go."

"Go?" Fear robbed her of breath. "Go where?"

"Away from Madrigal—anywhere—and at once; tomorrow at latest." And then, seeing the look of horror in her face, "What else, what else?" he added, impatiently. "This meddlesome provincial may be stirring up trouble already."

She fought down her emotion. "I . . . I shall see him before he goes?" she begged.

"I don't know. It may not be wise. I must consider." He flung away in deepest perturbation, leaving her with a sense that life was slipping from her.

That late September evening, as she sat stricken in her room, hoping against hope for at least another glimpse of him. Dona Maria de Grado brought word that Espinosa was even then in the convent in Frey Miguel's cell. Fearful lest he should be smuggled thence without her seeing him, and careless of the impropriety of the hour—it was already eight o'clock and dusk was falling—she at once dis-

patched Roderos to the friar, bidding him bring Espinosa to her in the parlour.

The friar obeyed, and the lovers—they were no less by now—came face to face in anguish.

"My lord, my lord," she cried, casting all prudence to the winds, "what is decided?"

"That I leave in the morning," he answered.

"To go where?" She was distraught.

"Where?" He shrugged. "To Valladolid at first, and then . . . where God pleases."

"And when shall I see you again?"

"When . . . when God pleases."

"Oh, I am terrified . . . if I should lose you . . . if I should never see you more!" She was panting, distraught.

"Nay, lady, nay," he answered. "I shall come for you when the time is ripe. I shall return by All Saints, or by Christmas at the latest, and I shall bring with me one who will avouch me."

"What need any to avouch you to me?" she protested, on a note of fierceness. "We belong to each other, you and I. But you are free to roam the world, and I am caged here helpless. . . ."

"Ah, but I shall free you soon, and we'll go hence together. See." He stopped to the table. There was an ink-horn, a box of pounce, some quills, and a sheaf of paper there. He took up a quill, and wrote—with labour, for princes are notoriously poor scholars:

"I, Don Sebastian, by the Grace of King of Portugal, take to wife the most serene Dona Ana of Austria, daughter of the most serene Prince, Don John of Austria, by virtue of the dispensation which I hold from two pontiffs."

And he signed it—after the manner of the Kings of Portugal in all ages—"El Rey"—the King.

"Will that content you, lady?" he pleaded, handing it to her.

"How shall this scrawl content me?"

"It is a bond I shall redeem as soon as Heaven will permit."

Thereafter she fell weeping, and he to protesting, until Frey Miguel urged him to depart, as it grew late. And then she forgot her own grief, and became all solicitude for him, until naught would contend her but she must empty into his hands her little store of treasure—a hundred ducats and such jewels as she possessed, including a gold watch set with diamonds and a ring bearing a cameo portrait of King Philip, and last of all a portrait of herself, of the size of a playing-card.

At last, as ten was striking,

he was hurried away. Frey Miguel had gone on his knees to him, and kissed his hand, what he had passionately urged him not to linger; and then Sebastian had done the same by the Princess, both weeping now. At last he was gone, and on the arm of Dona Maria de Grado the forlorn Anne staggered back to her cell to weep and pray.

In the days that followed she moved, pale and listless, oppressed by her sense of loss and desolation, a desolation which at last she sought to mitigate by writing to him to Valladolid, whither he had repaired. Of all those letters only two survive.

"My king and lord," she wrote in one of thes, "alas! How we suffer by absense! I am so filled with the pain of it that if I did seek the relief of writing to your Majesty and thus send some moments in communion with you, there would be an end to me. What I feel to-day is what I feel every day when I recall the happy moments so deliciously spent, which are no more. This privation is for me so severe a punishment of heaven that I should call it unjust. For without cause I find myself deprived of the happiness missed by me for so many years and purchased at the price of suffering and tears. Ah, my lord, how willingly, would I not suffer all over again the misfortunes that have crushed me if thus I might spare your Majesty the least of them. May he who rules the world grant my prayers and set a term so great an unhappiness, and to the intolerable torment I suffer through being deprived of the presence of your Majesty. It were impossible for long to suffer so much pain and live.

"I belong to you, my lord; you know it already. The troth I plighted to you I shall keep in life and in death, for death itself could not tear my soul, and this immortal soul will harbour it through eternity . . . ."

Thus and much more in the same manner wrote the niece of King Philip of Spain to Gabriel Espinosa, the pastry-cook, in his Valladolid retreat. How he filled his days we do not know, beyond the fact that he moved freely abroad. For it was in the streets of that town that meddlesome Fate brought him face to face one day with Gregorio Gonzales, under whom Espinosa had been a scullion once in the service of the Count of Nyeba.

Gregorio hailed him, staring round-eyed; for although Espinosa's garments were not in their first freshness they were far from

being those of a plebeian.

"In whose service may you be now?" quoth the intrigued Gregorio, so soon as greetings had passed between them.

Espinosa shook off his momentary embarrassment, and took the hand of his sometime comrade. "Times are changed, friend Gregorio. I am not in anybody's service, rather do I require servants myself."

"Why, what is your present situation?"

Loftily Espinosa put him off. "No matter for that," he answered, with a dignity that forbade further questions. He gathered his cloak about him to proceed upon his way. "If there is anything you wish for I shall be happy, for old times' sake, to oblige you."

But Gregorio was by no means disposed to part from him. We do not readily part from an old friend whom we rediscover in an unsuspected state of affluence. Espinosa must home with Gregorio. Gregorio's wife would be charmed to renew his acquaintance, and to hear from his own lips of his improved and prosperous state. Gregorio would take no refusal, and in the end Espinosa, yielding to his insistence, went with him to the sordid quarter where Gregorio had his dwelling.

About an unclean table of pine, in a squalid room, sat the three—Espinosa, Gregorio, and Gregorio's wife; but the latter displayed none of the signs of satisfaction at Espinosa's prosperity which Gregorio had promised. Perhaps Espinosa observed her evil envy, and it may have been to nourish it—which is the surest way to punish envy—that he made Gregorio a magnificent offer of employment.

"Enter my service," said he, "and I will pay you fifty ducats down and four ducats a month."

Obviously they were incredulous of his affluence. To convince them he displayed a gold watch—most rare possession—set with diamonds, a ring of price, and other costly jewels. The couple stared now with dazzle eyes.

"But didn't you tell me when were in Madrid together that you had been a pastry-cook at Ocaãna?" burst from Gregorio.

Espinosa smiled. "How many kings and princes have been compelled to conceal themselves under disguises?" he asked oracularly. And seeing them stricken, he must play upon them further. Nothing, it seems, was sacred to him — not even the portrait of that lovely, desolate royal lady in her convent at Madrigal. Forth he plucked it, and thrust it to them across the stains of wine and oil that be-

fouled their table.

"Look at this beautiful lady, the most beautiful in Spain," he bade them. "A prince could not have a lovelier bride."

"But she is dressed as a nun," the woman protested. "How, then, can she marry?"

"For kings there are no laws," he told her with finality.

At last he departed, but bidding Gregorio to thing of the offer he had made him. He would come again for the cook's reply, leaving word meanwhile of where he was lodged.

They deemed him mad, and were disposed to be derisive. Yet the woman's disbelief was quickened into malevolence by the jealous fear that what he had told them of himself might, after all, be true. Upon that malevolence she acted forthwith, lodging an information with Don Rodrigo de Santillan, the Alcalde of Valladolid.

Very late that night Espinosa was roused from his sleep to find his room invaded by alguaziles—the police of the Alcade. He was arrested and dragged before Don Rodrigo to give an account of himself and of certain objects of value found in his possession—more particularly of a ring, on the cameo of which was carved a portrait of King Philip.

"I am Gabriel de Espinosa," he answered firmly, "a pastry-cook of Madrigal."

"Then how come you by these jewels?"

"They were given me by Dona Ana of Austria to sell for her account. That is the business that has brought me to Valladolid."

"Is this Dona Ana's portrait?"

"It is."

"And this lock of hair? Is that also Dona Ana's? And do you, then, pretend that these were also given you to sell?"

"Why else should they be given me?"

Don Rodrigo wondered. They were useless things to steal, and as for the lock of hair, where should the fellow find a buyer for that? The Alcalde conned his man more closely, and noted that dignity of bearing, that calm assurance which usually is founded upon birth and worth. He sent him to wait in prison, what time he went to ransack the fellow's house in Madrigal.

Don Rodrigo was prompt in acting; yet even so his prisoner mysteriously found means to send a warning that enabled Frey Miguel to forestall the Alcalde. Before Don Rodrigo's arrival, the friar had abstracted from Espinosa's house a box of papers which he reduced to ashes. Unfortunately Espinosa had been careless. Four letters not confided to the box were discovered by the alguaziles. Two of them

were from Anne—one of which supplies the extract I have given; the other two from Frey Miguel himself.

Those letters startled Don Rodrigo de Santillan. He was a shrewd reasoner and well-informed. He knew how the justice of Castile was kept on the alert by the persistent plottings of the Portuguese Pretender, Don Antonio, sometime Prior of Crato. He was intimate with the past life of Frey Miguel, knew his self-sacrificing patriotism and passionate devotion to the cause of Don Antonio, remembered the firm dignity of his prisoner, and leapt at a justifiable conclusion. The man in his hands—the man whom the Princess Anne addressed in such passionate terms by the title of Majesty—was the Prior of Crato. He conceived that he had stumbled here upon something grave and dangerous. He ordered the arrest of Frey Miguel, and then proceeded to visit Dona Ana at the convent. His methods were crafty, and depended upon the effect of surprise. He opened the interview by holding up before her one of the letters he had found, asking her if she acknowledged it for her own.

She stared a moment panic-stricken; then snatched it from his hands, tore it across, and would have torn again, but that he caught her wrists in a grip of iron to prevent her, with little regard in that moment for the blood royal in her veins. King Philip was a stern master, pitiless to blunderers, and Don Rodrigo knew he never would be forgiven did he suffer that precious letter to be destroyed.

Overpowered in body and in spirit, she surrendered the fragments and confessed the letter her own.

"What is the real name of this man, who calls himself a pastry-cook, and to whom you write in such terms as these?" quoth the magistrate.

"He is Don Sebastian, King of Portugal." And to that declaration she added briefly the story of his escape from Alcacer-el-Kebir and subsequent penitential wanderings.

Don Rodrigo departed, not knowing what to think or believe, but convinced that it was time he laid the whole matter before King Philip. His Catholic Majesty was deeply perturbed. He at once dispatched Don Juan de Llano, the Apostolic Commissary of the Holy Office to Madrigal to sift the matter, and ordered that Anne should be solitarily confined in her cell, and her nuns-in-waiting and servants placed under arrest.

Espinosa, for greater security, was sent from Valladolid to the prison of Medina del Campo.

He was taken thither in a coach with an escort of arquebusiers.

"Why convey a poor pastry-cook with so much honour?" he asked his guards, half-mockingly.

Within the coach he was accompanied by a soldier named Cervatos, a travelled man, who fell into talk with him, and discovered that he spoke both French and German fluently. But when Cervatos addressed him in Portuguese the prisoner seemed confused, and replied that although he had been in Portugal, he could not speak the language.

Thereafter, throughout that winter, examinations of the three chief prisoners—Espinosa, Frey Miguel, and the Princess Anne—succeeded one another with a wearisome monotony of results. The Apostolic Commissary interrogated the princess and Frey Miguel; Don Rodrigo conducted the examinations of Espinosa. But nothing was elicited that took the matter forward or tended to dispel its mystery.

The princess replied with a candour that became more and more tinged with indignation under the persistent and at times insulting interrogatories. She insisted that the prisoner was Don Sebastian, and wrote passionate letters to Espinosa, begging him for her honour's sake to proclaim himself what he really was, declaring to him that the time had come to cast off all disguise.

Yet the prisoner, unmoved by these appeals, persisted that he was Gabriel de Espinosa, a pastry-cook. But the man's bearing, and the air of mystery cloaking him, seemed in themselves to belie that asseveration. That he could not be the Prior of Crato, Don Rodrigo had now assured himself. He fenced skilfully under examination, ever evading the magistrate's practised point when it sought to pin him, and he was no less careful to say nothing that should incriminate either of the other two prisoners. He denied that he had ever given himself out to be Don Sebastian, though he admitted that Frey Miguel and the princess had persuaded themselves that he was that lost prince.

He pleaded ignorance when asked who were his parents, stating that he had never known either of them—an answer this which would have fitted the case of Don Sebastian, who was born after his father's death, and quitted in early infancy by his mother.

As for Frey Miguel, he stated boldly under examination the conviction that Don Sebastian had survived the African expedition, and the belief that Espinosa might well be the missing monarch. He protested that he had acted in good faith throughout,

and without any thought of disloyalty, to the King of Spain.

Late one night, after he had been some three months in prison, Espinosa was roused from sleep by an unexpected visit from the Alcalde. At once he would have risen and dressed.

"Nay," said Don Rodrigo, restraining him, "that is not necessary for what is intended."

It was a dark phrase which the prisoner, sitting up in bed with touzled hair, and blinking in the light of the torches, instantly interpreted into a threat of torture. His face grew white.

"It is impossible," he protested. "The King cannot have ordered what you suggest. His Majesty will take into account that I am a man of honour. He may require my death, but in an honourable manner, and not upon the rack. And as for its being used to make me speak, I have nothing to add to what I have said already."

The stern, dark face of the Alcalde was overspread by a grim smile.

"I would have you remark that you fall into contradictions. Sometimes you pretend to be of humble and lowly origin, and sometimes a person of honourable degree. To hear you at this moment one might suppose that to submit you to torture would be to outrage your dignity. What then . . ."

Don Rodrigo broke off suddenly to stare, then snatched a torch from the hand of his alguaziles and held it close to the face of the prisoner, who cowered now, knowing full well what it was the Alcade had detected. In that strong light Don Rodrigo saw that the prisoner's hair and beard had turned grey at the roots, and so received the last proof that he had to do with the basest of impostures. The fellow had been using dyes, the supply of which had been cut short by his imprisonment. Don Rodrigo departed well-satisfied with the results of that surprise visit.

Thereafter Espinosa immediately shaved himself. But it was too late, and even so, before many weeks were past his hair had faded to its natural grey, and he presented the appearance of what in fact he was—a man of sixty, or thereabouts.

Yet the torture to which he was presently submitted drew nothing from him that could explain all that yet remained obscure. It was from Frey Miguel, after a thousand prevarications and tergiversations, that the full truth—known to himself alone—was extracted by the rack.

He confessed that, inspired by the love of country and the ardent desire to liberate Portugal from the Spanish yoke, he had

never abandoned the hope of achieving this, and of placing Don Antonio, the Prior of Crato, on the throne of his ancestors. He had devised a plan, primarily inspired by the ardent nature of the Princess Anne and her impatience of the conventual life. It was while casting about for the chief instrument that he fortuitously met Espinosa in the streets of Madrigal. Espinosa had been a soldier, and had seen the world. During the war between Spain and Portugal he had served in the armies of King Philip, had befriended Frey Miguel when the friar's convent was on the point of being invaded by soldiery, and had rescued him from the peril of it. Thus they had become acquainted, and Frey Miguel had had an instance of the man's resource and courage. Further, he was of the height of Don Sebastian and of the build to which the king might have grown in the years that were sped, and he presented other superficial resemblances to the late king. The colour of his hair and beard could be corrected; and he might be made to play the part of the Hidden Prince for whose return Portugal was waiting so passionately and confidently. There had been other impostors aforetime, but they had lacked the endowments of Espinosa, and their origins could be traced without difficultry. In addition to these natural endowments, Espinosa should be avouched by Frey Miguel—than whom nobody in the world was better qualified in such a matter—and by the niece of King Philip, to whom he would be married when he raised his standard. It was arranged that the three should go to Paris so soon as the arrangements were complete, where the Pretender would be accredited by the exiled friends of Don Antonio residing there—the Prior of Crato being a party to the plot. From France, Frey Miguel would have worked in Portugal through his agents, and presently would have gone there himself to stir up a national movement in favour of a pretender so fully accredited. Thus he had every hope of restoring Portugal to her independence. Once this should have been accomplished, Don Antonio would appear in Lisbon, unmask the impostor, and himself assume the crown of the kingdom which had been forcibly and definitely wrenched from Spain.

That was the crafty plan which the priest had laid with a singleness of aim and a detachment from minor considerations that never hesitated to sacrifice the princess, together with the chief instrument of the intrigue. Was the liberation of a kingdom, the

deliverance of a nation from servitude, the happiness of a whole people, to weigh in the balance against the fates of a natural daughter of Don John of Austria and a solder of fortune turned pastry-cook? Frey Miguel thought not, and his plot might well have succeeded but for the base strain in Espinosa and the man's overweening vanity, which had urged him to dazzle the Gonzales at Valladolid. That vanity sustained him to the end, which he suffered in October of 1595, a full year after his arrest. To the last he avoided admissions that should throw light upon his obscure identity and origin.

"If it were known who I am . . ." he would say, and there break off.

He was hanged, drawn and quartered, and he endured his fate with calm fortitude. Frey Miguel suffered in the same way with the like dignity, after having undergone degradation from his priestly dignity.

As for the unfortunate Princess Anne, crushed under a load of shame and humiliation, she had gone to her punishment in the previous July. The Apostolic Commissary notified her of the sentence which King Philip had confirmed. She was to be transferred to another covent, there to undergo a term of four years' solitary confinement in her cell, and to fast on bread and water every Friday. She was pronounced incapable of ever holding any office, and was to be treated on the expiry of her term as an ordinary nun, her civil list abolished, her title of Excellency to be extinguished, together with all other honours and privileges conferred upon her by King Philip.

The piteous letters of supplication that she addressed to the King, her uncle, still exist. But they left the cold, implacable Philip of Spain unmoved. Her only sin was that, yielding to the hunger of her starved heart, and chafing under the ascetic life imposed upon her, she had allowed herself to be fascinated by the prospect of becoming the protectress of one whom she believed to be an unfortunate and romantic prince, and of exchanging her convent for a throne.

Her punishment—poor soul—endured for close upon forty years, but the most terrible part of it was not that which lay within the prescription of King Philip, but that which arose from her own broken and humiliated spirit. She had been uplifted a moment by a glorious hope, to be cast down again into the blackest despair to which a shame unspeakable and a tortured pride were added.

Than hers, as I have said, there is in history no sadder story.

a link still missing

by G. B. Stern

I POSSESS two little bronze Kylins, fierce and cross and monstrously ugly, squatting on the ledge of my desk; and when I went to Hollywood at the end of 1932 on a contract to write scripts for a studio with an attack of Anglomania, I took one of them with me, I suppose as a sort of escort.

I have no idea how to read the Chinese lettering when I turn them bottom upwards to scrutinize the seal; nevertheless I have been told that being genuine, they are quite valuable. They came to me comically accompanied by an enormous bright pink and bright blue powder-puff, ever so pretty; Christmas presents from Nannie, my housekeeper, too old now to cope with the very young.

She had once accompanied one of her adored nurslings on a tour round the world, and apparently the child's parents must have suggested that wherever they were cheap she should bring back small mementoes of far countries, and if she felt so inclined, give them away and

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thereby acquire great merit.

So old Nannie presented them to me expressing the utmost diffidence.

And with no hope they could find favor with any sensible employer, supplemented them with that cheerful powder-puff so that I should have something I really *liked*.

You will have read about the earthquake which happened in South California towards the end of March 1933. It did a lot of damage at Los Angeles, and devastated Campion and Sant' Anna. But at Santa Monica, where I had leased a delightful bungalow and garden high up on the Palisades overlooking the Pacific, we did not suffer any worse than what is literally expressed by "a bad shake-up."

I was just stepping into my bath when, so to speak, my bath chose to step out and wash all over me: floors were heaving, pictures and ornaments rattling down from the walls, bricks from the chimney, tiles from the roof.

"I must be ill," I told myself fatuously, but I was perfectly well and simply not broken in to earthquakes.

It happened that I was the only one in my household who was stark naked when that first giant quake destroyed for ever our sense of security that the spinning earth was solid beneath our feet.

Everybody else was already wildly rushing out of the house, indiscriminately snatching up their treasures and mine, and carrying them loose in any receptacle, basket or bag, to bear them to places of equal insecurity.

The tremors went on at irregular intervals all night. However, this does not set out to be a contemporary report of the event by an eye-witness, so I will pass straight on to what is relevant: the mystery, never solved, of where and how I could have lost my Chinese dog. I was thankful that I still had the other engaging little horror in England.

It may have been about two years later that I received a letter from Kate Mansell saying she was in England, and might she come and see me please?

She promised not to take up much of my time, but there was talk at the LVQ Studios of adapting one of my stories as a vehicle for a brand-new baby star; and she would be so honored if I would let her discuss it with me.

So I gave her an appointment. Just before she was due to arrive, it occurred to me that her name used to be coupled with Lance Carshalton—"She's got a lech on him," somebody had remarked carelessly; "how she *can!*"

Well, several million film fans

could, so it wasn't surprising. Nevertheless, when she was shown in, surprise renewed itself; I suppose because I had an illogical idea that anyone whom I instinctively liked could not possibly have had a lech for any dashing second-rate film hero.

I approved, too, of the way she went straight to the object of her visit. And it was only over cocktails, after we had settled the main points of the adaptation, that instead of relaxing she seemed to lose her poise and sounded nervous and distrait. Finally she lunged: "I've brought you a present."

"That's very kind of you. I love presents." And, indeed, I am the sort of ass who instead of fearing the Greeks when they came along with gifts, would have been pleased and reassured.

"Well . . . everybody seems to be wearing them, so—"

"Them" proved to be a pair of long suede gloves in a vivid tint of petunia which was then expensive and fashionable; fastening with little pearl buttons the whole way up to the shoulder. Before I could control myself I gave a gasp of dismay which might have been taken for incredulous rapture; then thanked her with all the bogus heartiness I could muster.

But Kate Mansell was no fool, and saw through me: "As a matter of fact, I did have . . . I had brought another little present . . . but I was afraid you mightn't care for it; l-l-l-lots of people didn't . . . So as I stayed a week in Paris before I came to London, I thought the gloves would be nicer."

She brought a small parcel out of her handbag. Unwrapping it, a little bronze Kylin emerged, fierce and cross and monstrously ugly . . .

Thoughtfully I turned it over in my hand to expose the seal: "Chinese, isn't it? Can you read the lettering?"

"I'm afraid not. I might have asked the man, but it didn't occur to me."

"What man?"

"The dealer of an antique shop. I spotted it in his window in a back street of Pasadena and just walked in and bought it. It's hideous, isn't it?"

"Hideous," I agreed. And for a moment there was silence between us. Then: "Where did *he* get it?"

"I don't know."

A link missing that would probably never be supplied.

Suddenly, watching my face, she burst out: "You like it; I can see you do. Oh, I'm so glad. I felt you would. But then——" as doubt once more chased away her elation.

. . . Sometimes one finds it easy to confide in a total stranger. Anyhow, out it all came. She had

originally been impelled to buy it for "a great friend"; it was his fortieth birthday, and all his fans (she altered "fans" quickly to "friends," but of course she meant Lance Carshalton) all his friends would be giving him wonderful presents "and I wanted something *different.*"

Probably she had already been aware that her attraction for him was on the wane, if indeed it had ever existed except on her side. Poverty was not among her worries; she could afford to pay an exorbitant sum if thereby she could win one golden moment of approval from King Cad . . .

And he did the unforgiveable thing; threw back a present at its donor. Apparently he thought it insulting that she should bring him anything quite as cheap and repulsive. And with his hurtful: "Here, you'll find a use for it," not even bothering to pretend, her foolish illusions were shattered beyond repair.

Just as well, for she was not his type; any more than a really good collector's piece like this Kylin could ever have made an appeal to his unsubtle tastes.

I could imagine the look on her face as she silently took back her gift from his hand. And with a certain dignity, not yielding to catchpenny drama such as dashing it to the ground and crying: "Do what you like with it! Throw it out of the window! What do I care!" she went home, dropped it into a drawer of her writing-desk, and tried to forget its existence. And his.

Until she had a grand clearout before she came to Europe on this assignment, and there it was—"And I can't think why, it came to me that it was somehow right for you; not just anybody; *you.*"

"Maybe something about its goggle eyes," I conceded; "or that rosebud mouth stretching from ear to ear."

Again the tension relaxed: "You do want to keep it," she cried, childishly delighted.

"May I?"

"Of course. I brought it for you. Aren't those gloves frightful?"

"They must have cost you the earth."

"Never mind; I know dozens of people I can give them to."

"They remind me," I remarked thoughtfully, "of a large pink and blue powder-puff."

Naturally Kate Mansell was puzzled: "A *powder-puff?* Why?"

"Oh . . . one gets these crazy fancies."

"D'you know, I can hardly believe even now that you really like it."

Confidence in her own judgment were better restored for good and all. So I got up and went into my room to fetch the other little bronze dog.

adventure of the spurious tamerlane

by August Derleth

"A SUMMER IDYL," was what my friend Solar Pons called the curious adventure which began one July afternoon with the appearance on the threshold of our quarters in Praed Street of a street gamin bearing a somewhat begrimed folded note. Under touseled blonde hair, his blue eyes looked up at me out of a freckled face.

"Mr. Pons?" he asked. "Mr. Solar Pons?"

It was a rare occasion on which a visitor did not immediately identify Pons, who stood behind me in the living-room, and I hesitated a moment before replying.

"'E said as it was 7B," said the boy urgently.

"And it is, my lad," said Pons, coming up behind me and reaching for the paper clutched in our visitor's fingers, while with the other hand he tossed him a bob.

The boy caught his tip and was off like a flash, clattering down the steps in marked contrast to the careful manner in which he had mounted to our floor.

Pons stepped over to the window, unfolding the note as he

"They are a strange people, these book collectors," Sherlock Holmes pointed out some months ago in Vincent Starrett's classic Holmes pastiche, THE ADVENTURE OF THE UNIQUE HAMLET (SMM, July 1964). Again we have reason to observe how accurate the Master's observation was as a purportedly rare volume plays its role in a case for Mr. Solar Pons of Praed Street.

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walked. He read it without expression, but his eyes were twinkling when he handed me the paper. It was rough to the touch, and had a torn edge characteristic of the valley of a book. Its message had been hastily scrawled with a pencil on the first piece of paper to come to hand.

"Mr. Pons, dear sir," it read, *"I would be obliged to you if you could step around to my barrow. I have something of a problem that may interest you. I am, sir, your respectful servant, Joshua Bryant."*

"What do you make of that, Parker?" asked Pons.

I was sure of my ground and answered confidently. "This note is written on the endpaper of a book—an old book, and no doubt secondhand," I said. "Mr. Bryant is very probably a dealer in secondhand books."

Pons burst into approving laughter, clapped me heartily on the back and cried, "At any time now I can retire to Sussex and keep bees! Is it not remarkable what a little exposure to ordinary ratiocination will do for one!"

"You know him, then?"

"He has a book barrow in Farringdon Road. I have on occasion paused to look over his wares."

"You're going then?"

"I never scorn the possibility of a little adventure to vary the prosaic routine," he said. "Let us just step around and pay Mr. Bryant a call."

The Farrington Road Book Market consisted of a row of barrows—some on wheels, some on wooden supports which held only boards on which books were displayed — set along the kerb. The wheeled barrows were supplied with canvas covering which could be rolled back on sunny days, and unrolled to cover books and browsers on days of rain and weather. The market was not far from the Farringdon Station in one direction and the Great Northern Railway Depot in the other, and the spire of St. Peter's rose on the horizon behind the row of barrows. A score of people browsed among the books at the kerb, most of them men.

Joshua Bryant was a short, rotund man with a florid face which made a strong contrast to his thatch of white hair. His eyes were bright and alert, and bespoke more than ordinary intelligence. He acknowledged his introduction to me with a friendly nod, but his face told us nothing.

"I appreciate your coming, Mr. Pons," he said, without preamble. "Have a look at that."

So saying, he took from the side pocket of his jacket a slender, teacolored, paperbound booklet and laid it before Pons, deftly turning back the cover to the title page, which could be read at a glance. *"Tamerlane and*

Other Poems. By a Bostonian." A quotation from Cowper followed, though somewhat badly printed: "Young bards are giddy, and young hearts are warm,/ And make mistakes for manhood to reform." Then came the name of the publisher: "Boston: Calvin F. S. Thomas . . . Printer." and the date: "1827".

I glanced at Pons and saw his eyes lit with interest. He in turn looked inquiringly at Bryant.

"Mr. Pons," he said earnestly, "that book was not in my barrow when I came here this morning. It doesn't belong to me. I neither bought it nor took it in in trade. Yet I found it among the books about two hours ago." His eyes challenged Pons. "Do you know its value?"

"It is one of the rarest of American books," said Pons. "Worth perhaps five thousand pounds."

Bryant nodded. "It's worth more than I am," he said wryly. "I said to myself right away, there's a smell of fish about this! So I sent off that note to you."

Pons picked up the booklet. "May I borrow it?"

"Do, Mr. Pons."

"But first, a question or two. What of your clientele this morning?"

"Oh, the usual. I have the regulars, Mr. Pons, the same as anyone else. Then there are those who come and go."

"Ah, but anyone unusual?"

Bryant looked thoughtful. "A lady," he said presently. "She bought a book of poems. Rupert Brooke."

"Describe her."

"Young, well-dressed, married. Not the sort I'd have expected to see here, but then, Mr. Pons, books draw from all walks of life."

"Dark or light?"

"Oh, on the dark side. Chestnut brown."

"The color of her eyes?"

"She wore tinted glasses."

"I see. Anyone else?"

"A young barrister, I took him to be. He bought a *Raffles.* Then there was the elderly gentleman in morning clothes. Got out of a Daimler, driven by a chauffeur. The barrister was perhaps thirty-five, the elderly gentleman certainly thirty years older. They lingered a bit, whereas the lady more or less drifted by."

"What did the elderly gentleman buy?"

"Nothing, Mr. Pons. I thought he'd take a book on chess he looked at for a while, but he put it back."

"Did any of these people go to any other barrow, if you noticed?"

"The barrister stopped at them all. The lady just walked away, and the elderly gentleman returned to his car and was driven off."

"Can you describe him?"

"Grey-haired, but not as white as I am, Mr. Pons. He wore a Masonic ring. His hands were well groomed. There was a moustache on his upper lip, but his chin was clean-shaven. He had blue eyes, and a squarish face."

"Anyone further?"

Bryant shook his head.

"Very well. You'll hear from me, Mr. Bryant."

Pons said not a word all the way back to 7B, and, once there, he retired at once to the corner of the room by the window where he kept his scientific laboratory, such as it was. There I left him to attend to three calls I had to make.

When I returned to our quarters in time for dinner, I found Pons sitting deep in thought in his favorite chair, his eyes closed and his fingers tended before him. He had evidently only just finished a pipeful of the odoriferous shag he smoked, for our quarters reeked of it.

"I suppose you've solved the mystery of Mr. Bryant's valuable book," I ventured.

"No, no," he said almost irritably, "it is more of a mystery than ever. And the book is not valuable. It is spurious—a very clever copy, but a forgery.

He came to his feet and strode to the table where the *Tamerlane* lay.

"Look here, Parker. The date of publication is 1827. Less than a dozen copies of this book are known to exist, though a considerably larger edition was printed. Poe wrote that the book was 'suppressed for private reasons'—this accounts for its scarcity. But this copy could not have been printed in 1827, for an analysis of the paper on which it has been printed shows that the paper was made of chemically treated wood pulp. Chemical treatment for wood pulp was not, however, introduced in papermaking until after 1880. Further, the paper contains esparto grass, which was not used until 1861. And most obvious of all, the type has no kerns, and alphabets without kerns were not introduced anywhere in the world until the early 1880's. This book therefore has no value except as a literary curiosity."

"Then no one, after all, has lost or misplaced a valuable book," I said.

"Ah, that is the nub of the problem. I submit that the reason for being of this spurious *Tamerlane* is likely to be of more interest than its discovery in Bryant's barrow. One of his customers this morning left it there."

"But which?"

"I submit it was the lady. I detected lint from her white gloves on the book, but even so, it is quite the sort of thing a lady

would be more likely to do than a man. The book is a skilled, professional job. How came it into being? Was it done with the intention of deceiving someone into buying it? If so, how came it into Bryant's barrow?"

"It was certainly done with the intention of deceiving someone," I said. "What other purpose would a spurious copy of anything have?"

"Elementary," agreed Pons. "But I submit that the precise purpose of the deception is not nearly so clear. Presumptive evidence suggests that the copy was not made to be sold."

"What then, was it made for?"

"That seems to be the problem. Had it been made to be sold, we could hardly expect to discover it 'lost' in a barrow on Farrington Road. But its only other purpose must have been to deceive a collector for some reason."

"You infer then that it served its purpose?"

"Precisely."

"Then why not simply destroy it?"

"A man would logically have done so. But women are not as logical. I put it to you that the lady could not bear to destroy something in the creation of which so much effort was expended."

"Where do you go from here, then?" I asked.

"I hoped you might be able to tell me," he said gently. "Does no course of action suggest itself to you?"

I threw up my hands. "To find a woman on so slight a description as that supplied by Bryant seems to me next to impossible. There must be a hundred thousand women who fit that description in greater London."

"More," agreed Pons.

"But perhaps there is a genuine *Tamerlane* in London."

"Capital!" cried Pons. "My dear fellow, I congratulate you. It so happens that there is such a book. It is in the possession of the well-known bibliophile, Lord Heltsham. My brother knows him reasonably well. While you were on your rounds I took the opportunity of sending around to Bancroft asking him to dispatch a note by messenger to His Lordship asking that I be permitted to examine his genuine *Tamerlane* for a few minutes directly after noon tomorrow."

"Heltsham is hardly likely to be home at that hour," I pointed out.

"Oh, it isn't His Lordship I wish to see. I count on seeing his wife. He would hardly be likely to trust a servant to show me such a treasure."

"Lady Heltsham!"

"I fancy Her Ladyship knows considerably more about the spurious *Tamerlane* than Lord Heltsham does. I am eager to add

her knowledge to my own," said Pons with an enigmatic smile. "I chose tomorrow, because I saw in this morning's *Times* that His Lodrship has a committee meeting in the Lords at noon."

Promptly at one o'clock next day we presented ourselves at the front door of Lord Heltsham's town house in Bedford Square. The butler admitted us, showed us into the drawing-room, and retired. Presently Lady Heltsham swept into the room—a young, attractive and vivacious woman, considerably her husband's junior. Her pleasant brown eyes looked from one to the other of us, and without hesitation fixed upon Pons.

"Mr. Pons? I have the pleasure of your brother's acquaintance."

"I presume upon it, Your Ladyship," said Pons, and introduced me.

"You are reclusive, sir," said Lady Heltsham. "While your brother moves about socially, I see nothing of you."

"Ah, Your Ladyship, we move in different circles. Bancroft would not be seen in mine, and I do not derive much profit in his."

"You are a collector of books?" she asked them.

"Say, rather, of circumstances, events, and curious happenings," said Pons. "My interest is in the human comedy."

A little nonplussed, Her Ladyship came to the point of our visit. "My husband tells me you wish to examine his copy of *Tamerlane.*

"If I could impose upon you for a few minutes," said Pons.

"This way, please."

Lady Heltsham led the way into her husband's study, a room lined with books behind locked glass doors almost from floor to ceiling to such an extent that the room was unnaturally dark. Lady Heltsham moved directly to the mahogany table in the center of the room and turned on the strong light there.

"I will bring it to you, Mr. Pons," she said.

She crossed to one of the cases, unlocked it, and took from it a slender slipcase. This she brought to the table, and from it removed what seemed at first glance to be the duplicate of the book Joshua Bryant had laid before Pons the previous day.

Pons, however, was peering not at the *Tamerlane*, but at the wall behind Lady Heltsham. "Forgive me," he said, "but surely that is not a set of Dickens in first editions?"

She turned.

Instantly Pons exchanged for the genuine *Tamerlane* on the table the spurious copy he had carried along from our quarters.

"I believe it is, Mr. Pons," said Lady Heltsham, amused. "It has-

n't the value, of course, of this little book—hardly more than a chapbook, as you see."

Pons turned back the cover with a reverent air.

"What could have been the 'private reasons' which caused Poe to suppress it?" he murmured.

"I suppose we will never know, Mr. Pons."

"That is surely a challenge for some biographer," Pons went on, turning to the first page of text.

He bent to peer closely at the page, then turned from this position to look strangely at Lady Heltsham.

"What is it, Mr. Pons?"

"Surely His Lordship is aware that this is not a genuine *Tamerlane?*" he asked quietly.

Lady Heltsham bent instantly at his side, her face quickening with alarm.

"The absence of kerns, you see," began Pons.

But he did not go on. Lady Heltsham's simultaneous reaction was so violent that Pons' words were stopped in his throat. She uttered a great cry of anguish, and without a moment's hesitation rushed headlong from the room.

Pons immediately exchanged books once more, returned the genuine *Tamerlane* to its slipcase, and the encased book to its place on the shelf. He turned the key in the lock and brought the little ring of keys to which it was attached to the table to leave it in place of the book.

The motor of a car roared into life somewhere outside the house.

"Her Ladyship is now on her way to Farringdon Road," said Pons.

"That was a cruel trick, Pons," I said hotly.

"Was it not!" he agreed. "I rather think, however, that Lady Heltsham would never have admitted to any part in the matter of the spurious *Tamerlane* if I had not tricked her so. I regret the shock to her."

Pons sat in silence in the cab on the way back to our quarters until I broke into his meditation.

"I fail to understand Lord Heltsham's role," I said.

"If I am not mistaken, the spurious *Tamerlane* was used to occupy the slipcase during the absence of the genuine one," said Pons.

"Then Lord Heltsham never saw it!"

"In all likelihood he did not. I submit that the forgery was intended to deceive him should he have occasion to glance into the slipcase, though a close examination would have revealed the deception. The forged copy having served its purpose, it was dropped into Bryant's barrow. The gambit I took was intended to make Lady Heltsham believe that, in spite of her certainty to the con-

trary, she had inadvertently dropped the real *Tamerlane* in Farringdon Road. She has gone there to see. Bryant, who has no reason to dissemble, will tell her what has happened to the copy she left there, and in all probability Her Ladyship will then arrive at the correct explanation of the little scene in which she played such an impetuous role. She will return to her husband's study and discover the real *Tamerlane* in its slipcase; she will then know that I deliberately tricked her."

"And she will call on you," I put in.

"I doubt it. Lady Heltsham will wait upon me to make the next move."

"Pons, you cannot go back to the house."

"At the moment I have no intention of doing so. If I read Her Ladyship aright, she will tell us nothing. I shall have to use other means to learn why she found it necessary to remove her husband's valuable *Tamerlane* for some time from its slipcase and substitute a spurious copy.

"Could it not have been used to make a potential buyer of the spurious copy believe he was buying the genuine *Tamerlane?*" I asked.

"If that were the explanation," said Pons a trifle impatiently, "surely I would not now be in possession of the forgery."

"Of course not," I agreed.

"You imply further that Lady Heltsham might have been guilty of such criminal deception. Far from it. I submit that the lady acted out of desperation."

"I find this matter more baffling every moment," I said.

"Tut, tut! If we accept the premise that the spurious copy was meant only for the casual deception I have postulated, an interesting use for the real *Tamerlane* then suggests itself. Indeed, at the moment, unlikely as it seems, it remains as the only tenable one. You will remember my credo—when all the impossible explanations have been eliminated, then whatever remains, improbable as it may be, must be the truth."

"And that?"

"Surely so valuable an object as the rare *Tamerlane* would make excellent collateral!"

"Of course."

"And if Her Ladyship needed money urgently and could not ask her husband for it, she might persuade herself to borrow the *Tamerlane.* I myself would lend her up to three thousand pounds on such security—providing I had it to lend. I submit that any bank in London would do the same."

"Then you need only apply to the banks."

"Ah, that is information no reputable bank would divulge.

Yet, in the interests of Lady Heltsham, we shall have to examine into this matter from another quarter. Unless I am badly mistaken, she may yet have further need for the spurious *Tamerlane* she had made for her desperate purpose."

"I daresay you are hardly the person Lady Heltsham would care to see at this point."

"I do not doubt it," agreed Pons. "She will not see me."

"Lord Heltsham then?"

"The very last person to whom to make application." He shook his head. "No, Parker—these waters run a little deeper than you may think. We shall have to proceed with caution lest we precipitate the very tragedy Lady Heltsham seems to fear."

Thereafter he said no more, and we rode the rest of the way in silence, Pons leaning back with eyes closed so that the passing scene might not distract him from his train of thought.

Pons was up and way before I rose next morning, and without touching the breakfast Mrs. Johnson had brought up. I went out on my rounds soon after, pausing only briefly at our quarters in passing at mid-day, only to find Pons still absent. He did not return until the dinner hour, following me in by thirty minutes, and wearing a sober, preoccupied air.

"I have been inquiring into that little matter of the spurious *Tamerlane,*" he said as he took up a position at the mantel and began to fill his pipe with shag.

"Ah, you have solved it," I cried.

He shook his head impatiently. "Come, come, Parker, it is not a matter of solving, as you put it, but of knowing just where to take hold of it to bring about its resolution. How did Lady Heltsham strike you? A woman of character?"

"I thought so."

"And I."

"And under considerable stress."

"Elementary."

"But controlled—apart, that is, from exposure to sudden shocks prepared by Mr. Solar Pons."

Pons bowed his acknowledgment. "Would you not conclude, then, that if such a woman needed money, she would attempt to raise it through her own possessions before she borrowed her husband's?"

"I would, indeed."

"I have been making the rounds of the pawnshops for the better part of the day," said Pons then. "A description of the lady, with tinted glasses added and, no doubt, an assumed name, has led me to conclude that Lady Heltsham has borrowed money against all but her most essential jewels, two autographed books of some

rarity belonging to her, some valuable furs—and, at last, the *Tamerlane,* which alone has been redeemed because Lady Heltsham was fortunate enough to come into a small inheritance from an uncle. Indeed, announcement of it appears only in the afternoon papers, though the inheritance was obviously paid some days ago—two thousand pounds, all of which, I venture to guess, went to redeem her husband's *Tamerlane."*

"You've not confronted her with these facts?"

"Certainly not. I shall not. This need for money has been of comparatively short duration. Scarcely a year. Would it surprise you to learn that within that time Lady Heltsham has also begun to bet on horses and to invest in the stock market?"

"Ah, it is that vice!"

"Gently, gently, Parker. That is surely not a vice so rapidly acquired."

"But it is one in which she could hardly expect her husband to foot the bill," I put in.

"It does not strike you as curiously coincidental that Lady Heltsham who had previously shunned the races and the market, should suddenly begin to wager money and to invest it—somewhat incautiously?"

"Which came first?" I asked. "The pawning of her valuables or the wagering?"

"The pawning."

I shrugged. "And with that money she gambled!"

"You have a tidy mind, Parker, and you are always singularly direct. It does not seem to you unlikely that Lord Heltsham is too penurious to deny his wife a little money for a pleasure which has always commanded the allegiance of the upper classes?"

"I haven't the noble Lord's acquaintance, so I can hardly speak for him," I said, "but it is not improbable."

Pons added, his lips pursed, his eyes intent upon some point in space beyond the walls of our quarters. "There is one little aspect of the matter that puts an added light on it," said Pons then. "Her wagers and her investments have been far from matching the money she has borrowed—and I can say nothing of such securities as she may have taken to the banks."

"Did she in fact borrow against securities as well?" I asked.

"I think it highly likely that she did. There is everything to show that in her need to raise considerable sums of money, she explored every avenue before turning to securities that were not her own."

"Like Lord Heltsham's *Tamerlane."*

Pons nodded.

"But there is plenty of precedent for sudden changes in living

patterns," I said. "Lady Heltsham is not the first woman who has suddenly altered her way of life; she will not be the last."

"In these matters I must defer to your judgment, Parker," said Pons dryly.

"What do you propose to do?" I asked. "After all, you've solved the matter as far as Bryant is concerned."

"True, true. But I have not satisfied myself. And at this point I have gone as far as I can go alone."

"If there is anything I can do," I began.

"I count on your loyalty always, Parker, but in this case, I need expert help. I have called upon Bancroft and commanded the power that is only the Foreign Office's. I have had to inform him in the strictest secrecy that I have reason to believe Lady Heltsham is the victim of a conspiracy that may involve espionage."

I studied his face to see whether he jested, but the grimness of his features gave me no alternative but to believe him. Nevertheless, I could not but express my amazement. "Surely not Lady Heltsham! Perhaps her husband."

"Lord Heltsham is on the Munitions Committee," said Pons significantly.

"But what can Bancroft do?"

"He has done what I asked, and discreetly. Lady Heltsham's mail will be opened and her telephone tapped. I need to know who communicates with her. Unless I am very much mistaken, she will receive a communication of some importance within twenty-four hours. I am prepared to act upon it.

"You astound me," I cried.

"It is surely not the first time," said Pons, his eyes twinkling.

Early the next evening, Pons received from his brother the first batch of copies of the mail delivered to Lady Heltsham during the day. He pounced upon it eagerly. There were nine letters in all; I could not see that Pons read most of them, only beginning each of them, and tossing it aside. But at last, when he came to the seventh one, he paused, read it at a glance, and smiled.

"I fancy this is what we want, Parker," he said, handing it to me.

It was but the briefest of notes.

"Dear Lady,

"I count on your joining me tomorrow at two for a cocktail at Sardi's.

"Victor."

I looked up. "You cannot know the sender?"

"I fancy I do. He is Victor Affandi, a man about town. He is hardly more than an international gigolo, but highly popular with the ladies. He is of Egyptian

descent, and lives at The Larches in Laburnum Crescent."

"You think him guilty of espionage?"

"I should not be surprised if he were. He is an ingenious man, one who has managed to live conspicuously well without visible means of support other than a small allowance left him many years ago. If you are not averse to an adventure in larceny, we shall pay his quarters a visit tomorrow afternoon."

I looked at Pons askance. "As your friend Bryant puts it, 'There's a smell of fish about this'," I said. "What can you hope to find at Affandi's place?"

Pons smiled. "We shall see."

However much I may have been inclined to hold back, I was at Pons' side next afternoon when his skeleton keys let him into the sumptuously furnished apartment occupied by Victor Affandi. Once the door was closed behind us, Pons stood quietly in the middle of the living-room examining our surroundings. His keen eyes darted from one to another of the framed pictures on the walls—some patently original watercolors and oils—until he came to one only a trifle out of line. He strode across the room and lifted the picture enough to disclose a wall safe.

He stood for a moment contemplating it, then gently lowered the picture. "Affandi could hardly be so obvious," he murmured.

He resumed his scrutiny of the room. He contemplated the furniture, but discarded this, too. He went around the rug, raising it for any evidence of a receptacle in the floor. He passed on into the spare kitchen, the bathroom, and the bedroom, examining each in turn before he came back into the living-room.

"We don't have much time," he said. "I dare say Affandi's cocktail engagement will be a cruelly short one."

Apart from the costliness of its appointments, the living-room was simply furnished. Pons examined the furniture, but only desultorily; clearly he did not believe that what he sought was hidden in it any more than he believed the wall safe to be its place of concealment.

Finally, his eyes fixed upon a recessed shelf of looks. He crossed to it, and I followed. The volumes Victor Affandi had collected were almost depressingly prosaic—a Forsyte novel by Galsworthy, a Proust novel in French, books by Dickens, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, the poems of Byron, and, somewhat incongruously, two over-sized leather-bound volumes containing the Old and New Testament. It was this two-volume edition of the Bible which had caught Pons' attention. His eyes quickened as

he drew one of them from the shelf and opened it.

"'An uncommonly light book for one of its size," he said. "I fancy this is what we are looking for, Parker."

He turned back the pages until he came at last to a page that would not turn—and the rest of the pages were solid. The book was a dummy.

Pons sought and found the tiny lever that unlatched the cover of the dummy portion, and the lid flew back. There lay disclosed papers, documents, packets of letters, and newspaper clippings.

Without a moment's hesitation, Pons dipped into Affandi's treasure and proceeded methodically to stuff the contents of the book into his pockets.

"Pons, what are you doing?"

"Robbing Affandi of his treasures," said Pons blandly. "How many of his visitors would think of looking into a Bible!" he added, chuckling.

He locked the book, closed it, and returned it to its place on the shelf.

Then he took down the other book, also a dummy, and emptied this in similar fashion.

"Now, quickly, Parker, out of the place," he said.

In short order, we found ourselves back at our quarters. There Pons lost no time in sending a note to Lady Heltsham, inviting her to call at 7B at her convenience, and promising that she would learn something to her advantage. To all my questions, he turned a deaf ear, or worse, a scornful retort.

"It is as plain as a pikestaff, Parker. You disappoint me. You began so well in this matter, and you have been misled so easily."

He spent the next two hours, spurning supper, making an inventory of the contents of Victor Affandi's Bible. Some of the papers and letters he slipped into manila envelopes and addressed them for mailing; some he put aside for further examination.

Lady Heltsham presented herself promptly at eight o'clock. She entered our rooms with understandable reserve, and as she threw back the veil which covered her features it was patent that she was under tension not untouched by indignation.

"Ah, my dear Lady Heltsham," said Pons, "I owe you an apology for that little substitution I played upon you. Nevertheless, it has led to a result I am sure you will agree is a happy one for you. I believe these belong to you."

So saying, he handed her a packet of letters from Victor Affandi's collection.

For a few moments she gazed wide-eyed at the letters Pons held out to her. Then she seized hold of them with trembling hands, and her liquidly beautiful eyes

stared uncomprehendingly at Pons.

"Pray make sure they are all there," urged Pons.

She untied them eagerly and went through the packet. She nodded as if she did not trust herself to speak.

Pons turned and indicated the fire on the hearth. "I assure Your Ladyship I have not read them, but surely their nature is such that it would be dangerous for you even to carry them home."

She crossed to the fire and threw the letters into the flames. Then she turned and fell back against the mantel with a great sobbing sigh of relief.

"Oh, Mr. Pons!" she cried. "I cannot thank you enough. I cannot pay you. I cannot tell you how much this has meant to me. If my husband had learned of them—as *he* threatened . . ."

"Pray say no more, Lady Heltsham. If I may retain that spurious *Tamerlane,* I shall feel amply repaid."

"Please do!" she said earnestly. "Thank you, sir. I am happy to learn there are still gentlemen left in England!"

She bade us good night and slipped away.

"A woman of rare discretion," said Pons. "You will note she asked no questions, but accepted gratefully what fate had been kind enough to offer her."

"So it was blackmail! "Why then all this talk of espionage?"

"My brother would hardly have responded to anything other," said Pons. "You ought not to have responded to it at all. It was surely obvious that only the most pressing matter could have caused Lady Heltsham to pawn her valuables and then to take the extreme measure of borrowing money against His Lordship's genuine *Tamerlane.* Affandi must have taken a tidy sum from her. Men of his stamp never know an end to greed. I knew he could not resist the chance to make new demands upon her when he read the story of her inheritance, and I was certain his approach to her would be made very quickly, as it was."

"And the letters Affandi held?"

Pons shrugged. "I submit they were the customary letters of a woman in love unwise enough to put down in her own handwriting things which ought never to have been written at all. Affandi learned of their existence somehow, and probably bought them. Knowing that she could not afford to have her husband know of their existence, he proceeded with methodical coldbloodedness to blackmail her." He picked up the spurious *Tamerlane,* his eyes dancing. "I am delighted to add this curious memento to my little collection of items associated with my adventures in deduction."

colonel novena

by George S. McWatters

CONFIDENCE men, in the usual way, are so common,—such as the fellows who drop pocket-books, stuffed with counterfeit money, in the streets of cities, in order that innocent countrymen or uninitiated foreigners may pick them up, and divide the spoils with an up-coming witness, and give him all their good money in order to have a large share in the poor or counterfeit money,—that I have hesitated a moment over the caption I should give this narrative, lest the reader should think I am about to introduce to him one of those common, every-day affairs. But, on reflection, I cannot thick of a more appropriate title than I have chosen, for Colonel Novena *was,* of all the rogues and scoundrels I have encountered in my professional life, the confidence man, *par excellence,* as the French would say, not by the "excellence" of his high character, to be sure, or his normal worth, but by his artistic superiority.

George S. McWatters, who had been associated with the Countess of Lansfeldt, generally known as Lola Montez, and with Laura Keene, the actress, as their agent, was a member of the Metropolitan Police in New York between 1858 and 1870. In charge for several years of what was then known as the Bureau for the Recovery of Lost Persons, he was noted for his knowledge of the city and for his work with groups aiding the veterans of the Civil War.

From: KNOTS UNTIED, or Ways and By-Ways in the Hidden Life of American Detectives, by Officer George McWatters. Hartford, 1872.

The public will recollect, or such of them as enjoy retentive memories will do so, how much was said some years ago, by the public press, for a few days, about a certain Cuban, a "Colonel Novena," Count Antonelli," "General Alverosa," and "Sir Richard Murray,"—for by these names, as well as sundry others, was this gentleman in his career known. His true name, as definitely as I could ever learn, was Julian Cinquez; but even that is doubtful, and it matters not. He was a man of brilliant talents, indeed great native ability; and the wonder is that he did not attach himself to some honorable profession, or follow some pursuit in life recognized as legitimate; for he could not only have adorned any profession which he might have adopted, but he might have made an extensive fortune as well—or so we are apt to say of like characters. Yet, to confess the truth, I am not so certain that our moral reflections upon these matters are correct. The fact that the man did not lead the life which his talents apparently indicated that he might, is perhaps evidence in itself that the world might misjudge him. He might not have been able to "adorn any profession" after all, for in such men's characters, there is obviously always "a screw loose;" and for want of fixedness or tightness of that same "screw," is it, perhaps, that the general machine will not work. That may be the philosophy of the matter.

Colonel Novena was no small man in his way. He was a handsome man, too, possessing a finely-shaped face, with large, dark, not quite black eyes, and eyelashes such as would arouse the enthusiam of the master painters, and which gave to those eyes that sweet, alluring expression so irresistible to women; or when reflecting the light of anger from them, added a twofold horror to their expression, enough to make the strongest men quail, for the man then seemed a very demon. The colonel was about five feet ten inches in height, elegantly proportioned, his form being, perhaps, as nearly perfect, in every respect, as any man on the wide globe could boast of. Grace, dignity, and strength combined in it, and when at all aroused or excited, Colonel Novena was as lithe and flexible as a cat, or better, perhaps, a tiger. Notwithstanding the classic outlines of his face, it possessed great mobility,—and having a comical vein in his nature, Colonel Novena could imitate anything, from the grimace of a pretty, simpering girl, to the Falstaffian stolidity of a Dutch

judge, and was one of the most excellent of story-tellers, in consequence. In short, Colonel Novena possessed all the talents and natural "gifts" necessary to make a man the most acceptable companion under any circumstances. He won his way easily into everybody's heart, whom he considered worth his notice, either socially or business-wise; by which I mean, whom he regarded as of consequence enough to be exploited upon or victimized; and he had a way of exciting the sympathy of even officers of the law, when they felt conscious of his guilt; and I dare say that there has seldom ever existed a man so competent to play the *rôle* of "Injured Innocence," as was Colonel Novena. It is not surprising then that he ran so long a career of forgery and false pretence of all kinds.

Colonel Novena knew the art of dressing well. He was never over-dressed,—a fault of villains of his kind generally. He was never too poorly dressed for the special business he had in hand. His *rôle* of the gentleman of leisure and wealth was incomparably well taken; and being thoroughly educated, he acted the part of the literary *savant* to perfection. On the prairies or frontier, he was the most daring and hardy of backwoodsmen, and compelled the admiration of his fellow-travellers or hunters for his daring and prowess. He was a genius, in fine, socially. He seemed to need no "credentials" anywhere, save his fine manners and honest-looking face. Yet he always took care to secure the best letters of introduction everywhere, and had his trunks full of such things, given him by the great men of the land, such as President Buchanan, General Fremont, Professor Henry, Chief Justice Taney, Corcoran the banker, Mr. Seward, Andrew Johnson, etc.; for he obtained them from leading statesman of all sorts of political faiths, from men of science, and from leading financiers, and did not hesitate to demand the like of the most notable ladies of the land.

Why Colonel Novena never condescended to marry some one (or more, perhaps), of the ladies of great wealth whom he numbered among his admirers, is a mystery to me, for there was not one of them who would not have been proud to own him as her husband. But perhaps the colonel had some valid reason for remaining a bachelor, or for assuming to be one; for there is no certainty, of course, that he had not a wife somewhere, or that in several parts of the world (for he had travelled all over it) there might not have been found many ladies, each one of whom

might have claimed him. However, it is probable that such was not the case, for "murder" of that kind "will out" in time, as well as the real article of homicide, and I was never able to learn that the colonel was married.

As an example of the wonderful fascinations of the colonel, it may not be improper to relate here a tale, told me by one who was once on terms of intimacy with the schemer when he figured in Fifth Avenue society, and who vouched for the truth of it, as largely based on his own observations of the colonel's course with the ladies in question.

There were two sisters, the one a middle-aged widow, very rich, and quite good-looking; the other, much younger, very beautiful, but without money—poor, in fact. The latter was very gifted as a colloquist, and was a charming woman of society. The former was also a lady of many accomplishments. The parents of these ladies were dead, and the elder and rich one had assumed the guardianship of the younger, who lived with her, for she kept up her house after her husband's death, and lived in great style. The colonel made the acquaintance of the elder at a fashionable party in Madison Avenue one night; and learning that she was very rich, was, of course, sufficiently charmed with her to seek admittance to her house, which he duly effected. Calling upon the widow, he met her dazzlingly beautiful young sister. The colonel was in a dilemma; and it appears that he thought his only way out of it was to make love to both.

The sequel of the story is, that Colonel Novena so adroitly managed his addresses to these ladies, and gained such power over them, that neither dared disclose to the other the colonel's engagement to her, each sister enjoying, in her strictly secret heart, the sense of a sweet victory over the other: and in order to not expose her secret by receiving the colonel alone too frequently, often asking the other's presence on the colonel's calls.

Indeed, so fascinated did they become with the colonel, that they often visited his bachelor's quarters together, and there, in his library, spent hours at a time with him, reading, chatting, partaking of wine, and so forth.

They were almost without restriction in their affectionate caressing of the "dear colonel" in each other's presence; for what of jealousy should either feel towards her sister, when she held in her heart the sacred truth that *she* herself was dearer to the colonel than her sister? This complication of affairs continued for

several months, the parties meeting daily. The colonel had, of course, persuaded each that the usual announcement of an engagement should be foregone in *this* instance, for some wily, but apparently good reason, which he gave; and the gossips were at a loss to discover which of the two ladies he loved the more, so they "married" him to neither for a certainty.

But finally an end came to the duplex affair, and the sisters told the "secret" to each other; and the colonel was upbraided by them both one evening when he called on them. It is said, however, that notwithstanding the colonel's dishonorable course, either of the sisters would have been glad to secure him. But the colonel was now in a dilemma again, out of which there was no such sweet escape as before. The beautiful lady he did not want as an "incumbrance," and the "other charmer" could not fully command him, with all her riches, without the society of the more brilliant one too, which he knew he could not have if married to the former; for the colonel well knew what tyrants most women are to their husbands when they have them in their power, and he preferred his freedom to the slavery of a "boughten" husband's position.

The colonel was a bit of a social philosopher, and often "put things" in novel and clever ways. It was a saying of his, I was told, that "the condition of the average husband is the most comical and pitiable to be conceived—a slave to his wife or his family; a creature subject to all sorts of indignities at home, and not allowed to go abroad." "A model husband," said he, "is in these days little more, at best, than the gentlemanly butler or purveyor for his own house; has the privilege of paying all the bills, bearing all the burdens, etc., while his wife and family feel as 'grateful' as pigs at their dinner." Of course the colonel had in mind only the wives and families of fashionable circles.

The colonel's weakness was for "trading," in all sorts of ways, but especially in matters of considerable importance, such as in real estate, rich merchandise, ships, and stocks, as far as he could in the last. He made a good deal of money, in a manner which was legitimate enough, too, on the outside, but which always proved tricky. For example, going into a place like Milwaukie, Wis., he readily got himself reputed as a man of great wealth; would contract to purchase three or four adjacent building lots on some valuable site, at some future time,—say, three month thereafter,—for he

THE TWO SISTERS COURTING COL. NOVENA, IN HIS "LIBRARY."

always was about to send home (to Cuba) for his money. The owner would enter into a written contract to convey the property to Colonel Novena, or his assigns, at the time named, for a given sum for each lot. It was immediately noised about that the colonel was going to build a splendid mansion on one of these lots, and keep the rest for a grand lawn. Everybody talked about it, and the colonel, being an architect as well as everything else, produced drawings of the intended stately palace. The citizens were all very anxious to have so wealthy and tasteful a man settle in their midst.

By and by it was announced that the colonel had changed his mind. His mansion was to be put up at some other point, but upon two of the building lots he was going to erect an extensive block for stores, offices, and so forth, and the other two lots were to be sold.

These he would manage to sell for a very considerable advance above the price contracted for, as the new block was going to make them vastly valuable. Of course the purchaser must take them before the time ran out; otherwise the colonel, as he did not then want them, and scorned to be a mere real estate speculator, would relinquish his claim to them to the owner, but since he had gotten control of them, might as well ask something for their increased value.

As a by-play in connection with his various swindling operations, these speculations in real estate served to divert the colonel, as well as help fill his pockets. The building lots being well disposed of, the colonel could afford to let the original owner take back the two on which the famous block was to be built, and the purchasers of the other had only to wait till somebody or other should put up the desired block, and raise the value of their sites up to the imaginary height to which the colonel's elegant and magnificent pretences had elevated them; but then the poor fellows might have to wait years, for the colonel's block outshone, by far, all other possible blocks.

The colonel had a way of ingratiating himself with the teachers of female seminaries, finding out who of the pupils were the children of the wealthiest parents, getting acquainted with the young girls, taking a fatherly interest in them, getting introduced to their parents, and flattering them upon the genius and beauty of their children, and at last borrowing very considerable sums (just for temporary accommodation, till he could get remittance through his New

York bankers, of course) from the delighted fathers of the beautiful girls; and it was impossible to not honor the colonel's request under such circumstances. But the colonel had a shocking bad memory, and always forgot these little accommodations, amounting to from three hundred dollars to a thousand dollars, according to how much he had thought best, in a given case, to ask for.

In the town of Elmira, N. Y., I think it was, the colonel managed to borrow some thiry thousand dollars, all in the space of four months; and when one of the victims came to speak of the swindle to one of his most intimate neighbors, and a cousin at that, I believe, he was astonished to learn that this person could practically "sympathize" with him. The colonel had professed to each that he had higher respect for him than anybody else in the village, and had, therefore, in his extremity, sought him to confide in; for of all things in the world, he thought it the greatest shame for a man of means to borrow money, he said, but his properties in Cuba were of such a nature that his agents there could not always turn them into money instantly on command.

So each of twenty or more persons, perhaps, became the special and only confidant of the colonel; the only man whom he would not be ashamed to inform about his present "little unpleasant strait." It must have been rather an amusing disclosure for the other nineteen when the twentieth victim came to expose his special honors, joys and "profits" to them. Nevertheless, so engaging a man was the colonel that the most excited and threatening of his victims usually cooled down presently, if he had the boldness to give the colonel "a piece of his mind." This illustrates but partially the consummate skill and address of the colonel; and the number of his victims in many parts of the land was astonishing. The colonel bought ships even, or interests in them, and disposed of the same, and was always far away from the scene of his last fraud very speedily. There was no limit to his audacity.

Having gathered together a pretty large fortune here, the colonel left the United States, and went to Canada to reside, not as Colonel Novena to be sure, but as "Sir Richard Murray." He might have taken more money with him there than he did; but the colonel was almost as free in the use of his money as he was adroit in getting it. In fact, he was a philanthropist in his disposition, and aided a great many

poor people, particularly children, many of whom he sent to school, leaving funds with some worthy persons as trustees, to continue them at school. There was no element of meanness, in the usual acceptation of the term, in the colonel, for all his misdeeds partook properly of the nature of crimes, to greater or less extent. At the South the colonel, I am told, fought several duels,—never on his own direct account, but for sundry "friends," ladies especially,—and at New Orleans, his financial "speculations" amounted to "something handsome." I have been promised by a friend a narrative of the colonel's exploits in New Orleans to be incorporated in this article, but it has not been forwarded to me, and I must now do without it.

I remarked above that the colonel went to reside in Canada as "Sir Richard Murray." His residence was in Montreal, but he had a country-house about seven miles out of the city, where, in fact, he spent the larger part of his time, in both winter and summer, and where, for two or three years he dispensed an elegant hospitality. His splendid manners forbade any inquiry into his right to wear a title, and his knowledge of the English language was so perfect, that no one would suspect from his accent his Castilian descent.

I have not been able to learn that the colonel ever "exploited" in Canada. The States were his theatre; and during a residence of a couple of years in Europe, he practised his skilful "profession" considerably, I am authentically informed, especially in England and Ireland.

But the colonel came to grief at last. He had gotten a little "short," and having left Canada for want of means to longer sustain his princely mode of living, betook himself to St. Louis. I have forgotten to say that the colonel was an expert, and usually very successful, gambler, but he had no real love for the life of a gambler. There was hazard enough in it, but it was of the tame kind. He longed to do bolder things, and he did them. But the colonel had no reputation at St. Louis, and was obliged to turn to gambling, and for a few days he was successful, winning quite large sums of money, which aroused the resident gamblers to conspiracy against the handsome stranger, in that place known as Count Antonelli, an Italian. The result was, that the gamblers robbed him of nearly all he had won, and the colonel beat a retreat from St. Louis, and made his way, by degrees, eastward. Although he encountered several "old friends"

on the way, whom he had, in the years past, swindled out of various sums, they let him pass unheeded, or at most only warning their friends against him.

But the colonel's star had in good measure become dimmed, he found, and he made his way to Washington, D. C., where he revived some old acquaintanceships, and created new ones, which served him quite well for a time. But the colonel, finally playing a pretty severe swindle upon a person in high authority, and who prided himself too much on his sagacity and general good sense to be willing that his folly in this case be made public, the victim let him off, on his agreeing to leave Washington, and 'never show his head there again.' As the colonel could thus escape a long term of imprisonment, he gladly accepted the condition, and made the promise, which he strictly fulfilled, for he never returned to that city.

The colonel made his way from Washington to Saratoga, in the summer of 1862, where he made the acquaintance of sundry New Yorkers, of a class a little below the most distinguished, the colonel stepping down a little from his usual dignity and carefulness as to the selection of his society. With this class he "profited" considerably, and it is said that in the winter of '62 and '63 he managed to do a good business in various "speculative" way in New York, through introductions which he obtained from his new-made friends of '62. However, it is to be remarked here, that at Saratoga he had a new alias, that of General Alverosa, of Palermo, an intimate friend of Garibaldi, but who had been educated in England, which accounted for his excellent understanding of the English language.

In tracing the colonel by facts of his own confession, for which facts I was indebted, in some measure, to the late Dr. Jeremiah Cummings, of St. Stephen's Church, and through things stated by others, I find spaces of months, which I have to skip over. How the colonel got on to his last year of 1864, I hardly know; but in the summer of that year the colonel, it seems, became hard pushed. He had wearied out such few of his friends as he had not swindled, and was living from hand to mouth, dressing well yet, and making some show of means, but unsuccessful at the gambling-table and elsewhere.

Finally, there was one day found missing from a house in West 19th Street, where the colonel (rather, general at this time) boarded, a diamond necklace, belonging to a distant relative of Alexander Hamilton, of

revolutionary fame. The necklace was very valuable intrinsically, but a part of it was composed of diamonds, which had been presented to Mrs. Hamilton by some admirers of General Hamilton, English residents of some one of the West India Islands, I forget which, on which General Hamilton was born. These had been presented to her out of respect to the general's great statesmanship, etc., he from republican scruples having refused to accept them while occupying an official position under the government.

It was at this time that my special attention was called to Colonel Novena. I had known of him through the press, as I hear of other great men, some of whom one chances to meet, perhaps, but the majority of whom he knows "at a distance." There was great search made in the house for the diamond necklace; and upon no one in the place had a ray of suspicion fallen. It was such a mystery, in short, as to where that necklace had gone, under the circumstnces of its loss, that no one there conceived it possible that it would ever be found; and after the search in which everybody in the house took part (and everybody was glad to have his own rooms searched), it was thought preposterous to do ought else than to sit down quietly, and "give it up" forever.

But the mere fact that to a portion of the diamonds was attached a sort of historic fame, heightened, too, by the considerations of family affection and pride, induced the owners—(for the necklace was the joint property of a lady, and a gentleman who had succeeded to his deceased mother's interest therein) —to make some little effort to hunt out the necklace. They had thought that nobody who might have taken it would offer it for sale to the important jewellers of the city, and it was too valuable to be purchased by the smaller establishments. So they had conceived that the diamonds would be taken from their mountings, and sold separately, so as not to be identified. This thought had seized the owners at the time the loss was discovered, and had become, not a mere opinion with them, but a sort of conviction. So it was that they at once gave up in despair when the search at the house failed of the hoped-for result.

I was visited by the gentleman partner in the necklace, who placed the matter before me with all the facts he was possessed of, and I told him that I felt very certain that some resident of the house had taken the lost treasures; but it would be best for

me to call upon him there, and study the situation of the rooms, etc. An hour of the next day was fixed upon, and I called; had opportunity to examine the various rooms, and their relative situations. I found that no ordinary thief, however skilled. would be apt to run the hazard of penetrating the rooms from which the necklace was taken; and, besides that, it must have been somebody conversant with the place in which the necklace was deposited, or somebody who had been carefully instructed by some knowing one, to be able to steal the necklace at the time it was taken; for it was missed not a half hour after it had been taken from its case and redeposited there by the lady half-owner. I made careful inquiry about each of the boarders, and could fix my suspicions upon no one in particular; yet I came to the conclusion that it must be one of two of whom I was told, Colonel Novena being one, or, rather, General Alverosa, his alias then.

The owners of the necklace would hear nothing against the general; he was the last person in the world to be suspected. Indeed, they were so much affronted, and expressed themselves so emphatically, bordering on bad manners, at my suggesting the general as the possible thief, that I was obliged to say, very firmly, that unless they allowed me to take my own way about the matter, I would not go a step further. They allowed me to take my own course; but it was with ill grace they did so, after all; for the general had made himself a favorite of this couple, especially. He spent much of his time in their rooms when at home. Indeed, it was this fact, in a measure, which gave me a suspicion of him. Besides, they represented him as so perfect a character, that I confess I had fears of him from that fact too; for I have found the most wily rogues among men (and particularly among women) to be those who enjoyed the finest reputations. These make a good reputation a part of their "stock in trade." But this was not all that influenced me in my suspicions of the general. These parties, who had known him for quite a long period of time, knew nothing of his business pursuits, or if the general had any business at all; and only judged, at one time, that he might be a lawyer, from something he happened to say; at another, that he might be a broker in Wall Street, and so on.

But this was no occasion of suspicion to them, for they would have scorned to seem to wish to

know anything of a gentleman's private life or business. But to me there was ground of suspicion in all this; and I concluded to take board at the house, and study the general, work myself into his good graces, and learn his places of resort, etc. The owners of the necklace were finally convinced that this was the true way, and were ready to pay my expenses for a given time. I provided myself with neater wearing apparel than I usually wore, and took board at the house as "Mr. Henry Inman, artist."

Fortunately, one of my old school-fellows was both an excellent portrait and landscape painter, and had his office on Broadway. I told him what I was up to; and a sign, new, but made to look a little old, and bearing my assumed name, was place on his door; and a few of his sketches, some finished, others in process of completion, were assigned to me to talk about as my own, if I had occasion to introduce a special friend there. So that when "Mr. Henry Inman, artist," secured board at the house in West 19th Street, he also had a studio to boast of.

I had selected this disguise of artist, because in earlier days I had possessed a little talent at drawing, and could paint indifferently well, and had, to considerable extent, cultivated a knowledge of the great masters, and could talk, as I was pleased to believe, decently well upon artistic subjects; and I had learned that General Alverosa assumed to be a great connoisseur of art.

Being established at my boarding-house, I easily made the general's acquaintance, and in less than a week had entertained him at my studio; gotten so well "into his good graces," that he had no hesitancy in taking me to sundry of his places of resort, gambling rooms, etc., though he did not gamble much; and had found out that the general loved the fair sex, if not wisely, yet too well, and at last begun to get a clew to his career. But how I was to learn more of him directly through himself, was a puzzle; and so I set about watching the general's course nights, after leaving me. I found that he frequented a house of a peculiar nature in 29th Street; that the colonel went there every night, but that he usually got home some time towards midnight, staying away all night only seldom.

Putting together all I knew of the general, I came to the conclusion that he was indebted to some fair lady for a part, at least, of his support; and so I managed to get myself introduced to the house in question (for it was one

of those select places of pleasure which boast of their exclusiveness and "high respectability"); and on my first visit there encountered the general, who, finding me "surprised" at being caught there by him, and on my begging him not to expose me at our boarding-house, relaxed what little restraint existed on his part towards me, and took me into his confidence. The keeper of the house, an elegant, courtly-looking woman, was his especial friend—his wife, practically speaking; and I now could better understand what motive might have impelled the general, if he were indeed the thief, to steal the necklace.

I need not, indeed I should not, at any rate, go into details in regard to how I found that Madame Alverosa was in possession of that necklace; but so I found, and I had but little trouble in recovering it from her. The general had told her that it had belonged, for nearly a hundred years, in his family; and although it was a brilliant affair, and she was specially fond of displaying her jewelry, yet she rarely wore this, regarding it as something sacred; and it was only by a little strategy which could not be excused in anybody but a detective, that I found out she had the necklace; and it was not till it was safely in my possession; beyond the possibility of her immediately reclaming it, that I let her know I had it. When she came to know the facts, she affected great indignation at, and disgust for the general; but the woman loved him, and she implored me to let him have a chance to leave the boarding-house in West 19th Street before I should restore the necklace to the owners; and she said she would teach the general a lesson of honesty; that he had no need of resorting to crime; and that he had only been tempered to steal the necklace out of his love for her; he wanted to see her wear and enjoy it. Such was her generous, and probably correct interpretation of the matter. She offered, too, to pay all the expenses the owners had been to in ferreting out the necklace, my board, fees, etc., which she insisted on paying just doubly for, and which she did pay.

In view of what I had learned of this woman's charities, and her general disposition, I consented to her request. She maintained no less than five orphan children at different schools, paying all their expenses; frequently gave excellent marriage outfits to such of her girls as, desiring to reform, had chances to marry (a not unfrequent thing in New York); and would not encourage any girl to stay in her house;

indeed, constantly besought them all to reform, and seek some other mode of livelihood; and not seldom did she succeed. But there are some of those "unfortunates" to whom any other mode of life would be tame and intolerable. These the Madame disciplined into decency of deportment, and even attended to their education in books and music, etc., in order to render them as competent as possible to take care of themselves when the days of their physical attractiveness should have passed. She taught them economy, too, making each keep account with some savings bank.

In view of Madame's good qualities, I was disposed to respect her love for the general, and consented, as I have said, to let him withdraw from the boarding-house in 19th Street before I disclosed to the owners that I had the necklace in my possession. When I returned the necklace, and reported who had taken it, and gave the recital of my interview with the general at last, when I advised him to withdraw from the house, the reader may essay to, but he can hardly imagine the astonishment which was expressed by the owners of the necklace and the household when they came to learn the facts.

The general, of course, "took things easy" when he found that I had trapped him, so far as I was concerned; but he was greatly mortified in spirit to think that Madame A. had learned of the theft, especially in view of his romantic story to her about the long possession of the necklace in his family. He at first declared he would never go back to her, and avowed to me that this was the only crime he had ever committed; but when I told him that I could not consent to his leaving me with the impression that he had deceived me, and opened his eyes to many things which had been disclosed to me of his career by my fellow-detectives, with some of whom during the time of my special study of him I was in concert, the general (whom at the time, by the way of the better assuring him of my accurate knowledge of his charatecr I addressed as "Colonel Novena"), became very passive, and declared to me that if I would not further expose him, he would leave New York altogether, as soon as he could go.

Eventually he did leave; but not before he was fully reconciled to Madame A., who, as she told me, read him a moral homily which would last him for his life. And went to Canada, where she followed him, on a pleasure excursion. In about two

weeks after their meeting in Canada, a trip was planned with some friends through the Thousand Isles, and down the rapids of the St. Lawrence. Madame A. was taken suddenly ill, but not seriously, and staid over at a farmer's house, insisting on the "general's" going with the rest; and overcoming his gallant desire to linger with her, by representing to him that he would spoil the pleasure of all the rest by tarrying behind. So the Colonel Novena and the "General Alverosa," with all his other characters wrapped up in one individuality, went on with party, —which was the last time Madame A. ever saw him alive.

Proceeding down the rapids in different boats, the party had gotten nearly through all safely, when some mishap occurred to the boat which bore "Colonel Novena," and it was dashed to pieces in the rocks, he receiving so severe a shock that, although an excellent swimmer, it was said, yet he was powerless to save himself, and was drowned. His body was recovered the next day; and Madame Alverosa spared no pains in honoring his memory. The body was taken to New York, and thence to Greenwood Cemetery, where it now reposes beneath a stately monument, which, however, bears neither the name of "General Alverosa," nor that of "Colonel Novena," but a name equally euphonic, and certainly nearer the "General's" true one, if I am rightly informed; but Madame Alverosa is entitled to my silence on this point, for she asked it, and received my promise in response.

And here, in justice to the character of woman,—to the sex whom we love to honor,—and in praise of an individual of that sex, who by untoward circumstances, was led into a course of life so base as that which Madame A. long pursued, let it be recorded that a short time after the "General's" death Madame A. abandoned her vile profession, sold out the house she occupied and owned with the condition in the deed that it should never again be occupied or let for a like purpose; established a fund, in the hands of proper trustees, for the aid of a certain class of unfortunates, and withdrew to another part of the city, where she leads the life of a respectable woman during the winter. Her summers are spent at her elegant country seat, near one of the most beautiful villages in New Jersey. And the Madame has declared to me that of all her varied expenriences in life, that which gave her the most pain was the discovery that the general had stolen the necklace. She had supposed that

he gambled, and she was far from being unsuspicious that he might commit forgeries sometimes, or had done so in his career before she made his acquaintance; but all this she looked upon as in the nature, somewhat, of business.

"Wall Street gambles," she used to say;—"Wall Street commits its forgeries, and practises false pretences all the while, and men call these things there respectable. Why may not others gamble on a smaller scale, and practise their smaller cunning?"

Thus she justified the general against her own suspicions; but she could never get over the theft of the necklace by the "clever man;" and one day, when she was deploring his conduct, and I suggested that she might have the image of the necklace cut upon his monument, as a perpetual reminder to her, when she visited the grave, of the wickedness in the heart of "the best of men," the Madame shrugged her shoulders with a half-approving smile, and said,—

"Well, you may joke, if you like, but I know something of men; they are all bad, the best of them; and General Alverosa, with all his faults and his crimes, was a better man than any other *my* eyes ever rested upon;" and she looked *me* curiously in the face at that, as I bade her good day, and went away, thinking that, perhaps, I was properly enough rebuked and that, may be, no better man had lived, as surely no more remarkably gifted, elegant, and strange one, than "Colonel Novena," had I ever met.

NEXT MONTH —

THE PHANTOM GARDENER
by NIGEL BALCHIN

WHO AM I?
by MIRIAM ALLEN DE FORD

THE HORSE WITH HEELS
by NEGLEY FARSON

INSTEAD OF THE SAINT — IV
by LESLIE CHARTERIS

PHILOSOPHY AND THE DUTCHMAN

An unpublished story by WILLIAM O'FARRELL

— in the next **THE SAINT MYSTERY MAGAZINE**

ice for your party

by Fred S. Tobey

Dexton, Mass.

Dear Sally:

I meant to write before, but things have been sort of grim. Cashwise, especially. Mother and Dad went away for a month and left me here at home with nothing much but some groceries. I have to phone Aunt Margaret every day to tell her if everything is all right. Dad said he wanted to get through the summer without a nervous breakdown and he thought the odds would be against him if I went along. The trouble with parents is, you never can be sure when they're serious.

I get low as a limbo dancer when I think of not seeing you all summer, Sally, but what I could save out of the five dollars a week Dad sends me wouldn't add up to the train fare to your place, even if I cut out movies. I was thinking today, though, if I could just catch this Masked Marauder, as the newspapers are calling this character who is holding up the barrooms around here, I would be all set. One paper has offered a $500 reward, hoping to get him before he

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Some years ago we published a short story by Cornell Woolrich about a young man, a soda jerk in a small town, who for a brief moment found himself making history. And here Fred S. Tobey, who lives in New England, likewise writes about a young man who dreams — and acts. . . .

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shoots somebody. I don't know if you've read anything about him, but this nutty bandit has been cleaning out the tills and taking everybody's watches and money in the barrooms, just like on a TV show. He has a pal that waits outside for him in a get-away car. The cops have been after him but they always seem to be hanging around the wrong barrooms.

With nothing much else to do, I've been thinking quite a lot about that $500 reward for catching the Masked Marauder, but I haven't had any good ideas yet. For one thing, I'm too young to get in any barrooms.

The reason I don't have much to do is, I lost that summer job Dad got for me. Maybe you remember, the day you and your family left for the beach I told you this Mr. Parker who lives in the big house next door to us gave me a job working at his factory. You know we had this new course in High School last year called Business Economics, which is supposed to teach us what the free enterprise system is all about. My class was the first sophomore class to have it, and one of the gimmicks was you would get college credits if you worked at a summer job and made a good report on it in the fall. This Mr. Parker was on the town fallout shelter committee with Dad, and Dad conned him into letting me work in his office.

I guess everybody has to start somewhere, Sally, but this job was really goofy. Sorting a bunch of names on a mailing list, if you can picture it. Anyway, it gave me plenty of time to look around and get material for the school report I have to make on it.

After keeping notes for a couple of days I began to realize, from what I had learned in my business course, that is was practically a miracle if Mr. Parker was making any money at all, the way that office was being run, and I thought if I told him about it he might give me some kind of a better job. As a matter of fact, Sally, I suddenly had an idea that might even fix things so I could visit you in Maine.

What I did was put down all my ideas about how Mr. Parker could improve his business, and bind them up in report cover. Next day I got Mr. Parker's secretary to let me in to see him.

"Mr. Parker," I said, "you know we had this course in Business Economics last year at the High School?"

"Your father told me about it, Bill," said Mr. Parker.

"Well," I said, "from what I learned in that course, Mr. Parker, you could make a lot

more money if you would just change the way things are being run here. As a matter of fact," I said, "I have written down my ideas and I have them right here in this report."

Mr. Parker looked as if he might be going to say something, so I hurried right along to get the important part of my story across.

"I imagine you might think I expect a raise for this," Mr. Parker," I said, "but I don't. There is only one small favor I would like to ask, and that is for a vacation some time this month."

Mr. Parker looked at me for a minute without saying anything. I guess it's hard to tell from the outside what an executive like that is thinking.

"With pay, I suppose?" he said, finally.

"Yes, sir," I said. "I would need the pay because I am planning to take a trip to Maine."

"Well," Mr. Parker said, "I'm afraid I have some discouraging news for you, young man. Our directors have just paid a firm of consultants $10,000 to tell me what's wrong with the way I run this business, and I've had just about all the good advice I can digest for a while. If I'd known you were going to be with us I could have saved all that trouble and expense, but as matters stand, what we need is somebody to sort that mailing list you were supposed to be working on. However, I think everybody should have a vacation when he wants it, so I'm going to give you the rest of the summer off, starting now. Unfortunately it will have to be without pay, because our consultants advised me to cut down on expenses."

Can you picture such lousy luck as that, Sally? How could I guess he had just paid $10,000 to a bunch of consultants?

Anyhow, you can see why I've had plenty of time to think about catching this Masked Maurauder and getting the $500 reward, but it's hard to make any headway when they won't let me into the barrooms. It seems as if there's always something. Oh, well, maybe he'll start holding up candy stores.

Bill

Seashell Shores, Maine

Dear Bill:

Oh, you crazy goon! Why didn't you just stick with that job for a month so you'd have a little money, at least, and then you could *thumb* your way down here if you had to. It's pretty live here but I really was looking forward to seeing you.

All I do here is swim and sun-

bathe and sail. We just joined the yacht club and I've been sailing every day.

When you mentioned limbo it reminded me—there's a boy down here that can go almost as low as you can. I told all the kids about you and they're dying to meet you. Hurry and find some way to get here. Let me know ahead so I can warn Mother.

Sal

Dexton, Mass.

Dear Sally:

The minute I get a letter from you I start thinking of ways to make money so I can get down to see you, and this time I hit something terrific. It's a real business venture, and a lot better in the long run than anything like catching the Masked Marauder.

You know the ice dispenser down at the end of the street here, the gadget by the side of the road where you put in a quarter and get a bag of ice cubes? Well, I was walking home from an afternoon movie when I saw some men taking down the dispenser and loading it on a truck. I asked them if they were taking it away to repair it and they said no, it wasn't going to be there at all any more, because there wasn't enough business.

I was about half way home from there, Sally, when the big idea hit me—the kind of an idea that the alert business man has always got to be on the lookout for. Everybody knows that every family runs out of ice cubes once in a while, but did you ever think how much of the time those same people are just letting their ice cubes sit in the refrigerator and do nothing? In business we call that "eating their head off" (the ice cubes, I mean), but that's kind of hard to explain and I'd better wait till I see you. The whole point is, the ice cubes are just sitting there with nobody using them.

Sally, do you see what I was thinking? I could buy ice cubes from the neighbors in the morning, when nobody needs them, and take them home and store them in the refrigerator. Then I could put a sign on the house advertising ice cubes for sale, and sell them at night for about twice what I paid for them!

Why, the more I thought about it, Sally, the more realized I had stumbled on something that might turn out to be a big national company before I got through! Anyhow, I cleaned everything out of our refrigerator to make room, and turned the "cold" knob way over, and then I went calling on the neighbors to arrange for my

"source of supply," as it's called. Some of the people thought I was just kidding and wouldn't talk to me, but I finally got several suppliers lined up at one-half cents per ice cube.

When I had a pretty good supply of ice cubes stashed away in pans in the refrigerator I got some paint and a big board from the cellar and I painted a sign saying "ICE FOR YOUR PARTY—20¢ A BAG," and I nailed it to a tree on the front lawn. Right now I'm sitting at the window writing to you and watching for my first customer. It's really exciting to have a profit-making business of your own, Sally. Several people stopped to read the sign, and I noticed that Mr. and Mrs. Parker stopped their car to read it and seemed to be talking about it quite a lot. Mr. Parker is the man next door who used to be my employer, if you remember. As a matter of fact I think I saw in the local paper that they are having a big party for their daughter tomorrow night. She's going into society or something. But I suppose people always make plenty of ice cubes ahead for that kind of a party.

Well, I haven't had a customer yet, but I'm not worried. It takes time to "tap the market," as we say in business. Guess I'll run down to the Post Office now and mail this letter to you.

Be seeing you!

Bill

Dexton, Mass.

Dear Sally:

I guess all is not gold that glitters, as they say. The ice cubes are glittering, all right, but they have not been producing any gold, though I guess you would say it has been more bad luck than bad management.

When I wrote to you yesterday, which was Friday, I was waiting for my first order for ice cubes. Well, today I was still waiting when Chief McNulty of the Police Department came to the door and said I would have to take down my sign because it was against the law to put up a business sign in a residential district. He said he had a call from Mrs. Parker next door—she's the wife of the man I used to work for—and she complained about the sign. She said she was having some very important guests at her party tonight, and she didn't want them to get the idea she lived in the middle of a slum or something. I guess somebody ought to tell Mrs. Parker how some of the big businessmen of this country got started.

"Now, we've got our hands full," said Chief McNulty, "trying to get hold of this 'Masked Marauder' that's been raiding the

saloons, and we've no time to be bothering with the likes of you, my lad. Besides, that Mrs. Parker is a Tartar when she gets going, so out with you now and take down that sign."

Well, the law is the law, Sally, so I went out and took down the sign, but there are going to be a lot of real gone ice cubes pretty soon if I don't think of a new way to bring in the customers. Guess I'll run down to the corner and mail this to you now, and then come back here and see what I can think up.

Bill

Seashell Shores, Maine

Dear Bill:

I showed your letter to Mother and Dad, and they would like to have you come down to visit us for a few days if your Aunt Margaret says it's all right. Dad says your ice cube idea is clever, but you're selling a "perishable commodity" (he says that's a business term), and he thinks you ought to invent something that won't spoil, like a prune peeler. As you said, it's kind of hard to tell when parents are serious. Well, keep trying anyway, and write again soon. And for heaven's sake leave the "Masked Marauder" alone! I don't want to have to nurse you back to health while you're here.

Sal

Dexton, Mass.

Dear Sally:

I'm planning to take the bus to Seashell Shores Friday if that's all right with your parents. Aunt Margaret won't let me go any sooner because she says anybody expecting me ought to have a little time to get prepared. I guess you're surprised that I'm coming after what I said last time. Well, things have changed, and I'm pretty well heeled right now. I'll bet you'd hardly believe what happened.

You remember I said Chief McCulty made me take down my sign? Well, right after that the Parkers' guests began to arrive, and it looked as if it was going to be some party because there were some pretty plush chariots and some pretty fancy hairdos. By and by the people stopped coming and I suddenly thought if I went out and put the sign back up for a while, probably nobody would care and I might catch a customer or two. It was getting dark but there's a street light right in front of our house and the tree I had the sign on is right next to it.

I went out with the sign and was looking around trying to find one of the nails I had fastened it to the tree with when a catering company's truck drove up and stopped, and the driver leaned out and called to me.

"Hey, kid!" he said. "Where

do the Parkers live around here?"

"Right next door," I said. "Up that long driveway. They're having a party tonight."

"You're telling me!" he said. "Where do you think I'm heading with all these goodies? Look, kid, where's that ice machine around here? The boss said it was right at the end of this street but I must have missed it."

"That's where it was, "I said, "but they took it away."

"Hol-y mackerel!" the driver said. "The boss told me to pick up a mess of ice cubes for the Parkers. Now I'll have to shoot across town for 'em!"

He let the clutch in and started roaring off.

Sally, I suddenly realized my first big customer was sliding right out from under my nose.

"Hey, wait!" I shouted.

"Can't stop!" he shouted back. "I'm late already!" He clashed his gears and roared off, making so much noise with his old truck that he couldn't hear me screaming after him. And there I was, holding onto my ice cube sign!

Well, I felt pretty disgusted for a minute, Sally, but then I realized it was going to be a while before the catering man got back, and Mr. Parker might be grateful for a lot of ice cubes if I got right over with them, so I ran in the house and looked around for something big enough to hold all the cubes I had. The only thing I could find was a dirty old copper wash boiler, down in the cellar. It seemed kind of weak but I washed it out and dumped the ice cubes in it and it held all right, so I started up to Mr. Parker's house. It was a long way up there with the heavy old washboiler against my stomach, and I had a feeling every minute the bottom was going to let go. By now it was real dark but there was a little moonlight and I made it all right to the Parker's back door, through the trees. When I got close I sneaked along quietly because I thought I ought to go in the kitchen without anyone knowing, and then find Mr. Parker and tell him what I had for him.

When I was a little distance from the door I noticed a black sedan parked right in the driveway, back under the trees where it was darkest, and just as I turned sideways to get through the kitchen door with the big washboiler, a beam from some headlights down on the highway swung through the trees and showed up somebody sitting in the driver's seat. I thought that was kind of funny, but I didn't think any more about it right then, because when I got through the door into the kitchen it was all dark except for a couple of

long streaks of light from a doorway on the other side. I was standing there waiting to get used to the dark when I heard a short beep from the car out in the driveway, kind of like a signal, and all of a sudden I heard a door open in the kitchen and somebody came rushing towards me. All I could tell was that it was a big man, and I thought it might be Mr. Parker.

"Watch out!" I shouted, figuring he might not know I was there. Then I jumped to one side, trying to get out of his way with my boilerful of ice cubes.

Well, Sally, I moved too fast for that old washboiler, loaded the way it was. The bottom let go and there was a regular cascade of ice cubes onto the kitchen floor.

"Watch out, watch out!" I shouted again, but it was too late. The man stepped right into the middle of the ice cubes, and whammo!—down he went with an awful crash. There was a flash of fire and an explosion and I heard something heavy go skittering across the floor and I looked and there on the linoleum, clear as anything in a streak of light from the doorway, was a gun!

Sally, when I saw that gun it came to me in a flash that his man must be the Masked Marauder, and he had been in there robbing Mr. Parker's rich guests, and that black sedan out there beeping signals was his getaway car, with his pal in it!

He was scrambling up off the floor but right away he hit some more ice cubes and whammo!—down he went again. Sally, it may sound silly now but I can't help being kind of proud that all I thought of right then was keeping that bandit on the floor and getting the reward money so I would be able to see you. I dived for him and grabbed his legs and began hollering for help, and then people began coming from all directions. A man came pounding in from out back, and more came running from the front of the house, and then the lights came on.

Maybe you've seen something in the daily papers down your way about the Masked Marauder being captured. The city cops got him that same night when he held up a barroom in town. The man I had by the legs was Chief McNulty of our local Police Department, who was playing a hunch that the Masked Marauder probably had seen in the papers about Mr. Parker's big party, and would come there to rob all those rich people and take all their money and jewels. I guess the thief wanted to get the reward. Anyway, he hid in a closet off the kitchen and kept a patrolman at back in a prowl car ready for a chase, and all primed

to give the Chief a "beep" signal if he saw anybody sneaking around.

Chief McNulty was quite upset, not to mention bruised, and he was all for taking me down to the station on some kind of a charge, but just then his man came in again from the prowl car with news from his radio that the Masked Maurauder had been caught, and Mr. Parker started to laugh, and then everybody was laughing, and finally Chief McNulty began to see the funny side of it, too, or at least he pretended he did.

That was yesterday, Sally. Mr. Parker has been in a great mood and he paid me full price for all the ice cubes, because he said the guests told Mrs. Parker there wouldn't be another coming out party in a hundred years that would be remembered like this one.

"Another thing," Mr. Parker said, "I took a look at that report you left in my office, and some of your suggestions were remarkably similar to those made by our expensive consultants. I did not fail to point out the inference to our directors, and I don't think they'll be spending another ten thousand in a hurry to have a bunch of adolescents tell me how to run my business. You can have your job back, Bill, but the plant is closing down Monday for the annual vacation, and I'm afraid you'll have to take the two weeks off along with the rest of us."

"You mean—with *pay*, Mr. Parker?" I said.

"With pay," said Mr. Parker.

Aunt Margaret says it's all right to go and visit you for a few days, she says it may save her from that nervous breakdown that Dad isn't having. So please warn your Mother and Father that I'm coming. Dad always says there's a lesson in everything if we want to look for it, and I guess the lesson in all this is that if a businessman keeps trying hard enough, success is bound to come sooner or later.

Bill

INSPECTOR FERNE ALEXANDER

There were three women on the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force when Mrs. Ferne Alexander joined the Force eleven years ago. She now heads a thirty-five member women's division which she feels needs a hundred and fifty more women. The division could then handle all sex offences and assaults against children. In time, she may see this happen. In her early years with the Force she never dreamed they would get anywheres, she admits. "We were treated as poor relations. I suppose women go through the same thing in any field that has been dominated so long by men."

death in my dreams

by Laurence Meynell

I'M 45, thin and intelligent. I'm not a tragic loser in life, but I'm certainly not one of the big winners. I get by. I get by. I've never had much success with women. As a child I remember a period when I was intensely—precociously—interested in mathematics, especially in the particular time theory of the moment; but I've forgotten all about that now, and I doubt whether that can have much to do with it.

And during the war (still looking for a possible explanation of this thing I've got—would you call it a gift or a curse?) I was crossing the suspension bridge at Marlow just by the Compleat Angler while a German airplane, beaten off from London, was dropping its load near by.

An AA battery opened up and I got hit on the head by a fragment of falling shell. The only real touch of warfare I ever saw. Quite enough for me, too. I was badly concussed and was actually unconscious for five days in Marlow Hospital.

When they discharged me the surgeon asked: "No ill effects? No dual vision? No dual

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Laurence Meynell, British novelist and former literary editor of Time and Tide, *is the author of more than a hundred books, about half of them novels in this field, including the recently published VIRGIN LUCK (Simon & Schuster), ONE STEP FROM MURDER, THE FRIGHTENED MAN, etc.*

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thought?" He seemed quite interested in me: but at the same time anxious, of course, to get rid of me and to get on with the next case.

I didn't have any of the things he was asking about—then; but I have since wondered if that wasn't the start of it in some way.

The first time it happened to me was in June of 1961. I thought I was listening to the eight o'clock news (I have a radio by my bed) and the announcer was saying in the ordinary way "The Derby was won this afternoon by Psidium"—and then the details about the prices, distances, owners and so on.

A few seconds later I was awake and realized *(a)* that I had been dreaming and *(b)* that the Derby wasn't due to be run until three o'clock that afternon.

I have never bet on a horse in my life (I don't know how to), but I looked at the runners in the paper, and saw that a horse called Psidium was among them and told the hall porter at my club that it would win.

It did.

The next occasion when the wheel of time slipped a cog for me was six months later. I don't want to use the word dream—what *are* dreams anyway?; let's say that while I was what we agree to call "asleep" I saw an aircrash. A horrible business. Twisted red hot metal in a forest on a hill side. The trees crackling in the flames, passengers screaming with fear and agony and among them the face, momentarily but unmistakably glimpsed, of a woman I knew.

I was shaken.

After two hours debate with myself I rang her up.

"Funny you should ring me," she said, "I was just going to ring you, to say goodbye."

"You're off somewhere?"

"Tom sent me a cable four days ago to go out and join him. I've been running round like a scalded cat. It's all been hectic and marvellous. I'm flying tomorrow."

All right, you tell me what I ought to have done. I did nothing and the news of the crash was headline stuff in the Standard. No survivors.

I was finding out that seeing round the corner can be uncomfortable. And my third experience has made me very conscious of the fact.

I'm not telling you what my job is, you might possibly work out who I am; but I will tell you one of my hobbies—music. Not playing, but the history of it. Out of the way and rather recondite stuff. I've reached the stage when I am called an "expert" on

it. Which means that all sorts of societies that want something on the cheap get me to lecture to them occasionally.

Three months ago I went on this sort of job to Shropshire.

I was invited to give a talk. Medieval church music. A bit highbrow, but that's how they like it these festivals.

They were doing me proud. I was to stay at —— Hall, the seat of Sir XY and Lady XY (wild horses won't drag any closer description from me!) So I packed a dinner jacket and set off from Paddington.

At —— Station, and I didn't know such toy-like places still existed, I was met as promised. But not by my host nor hostess.

The housekeeper, Mrs. Bedford, an intelligent and obviously extremely capable woman, was there with the station wagon.

Every sort of apology; Sir XY and Lady XY were in Verona; they should have been back that very day, but their flight was delayed by bad weather and now they couldn't make it till teatime on the morrow.

Meanwhile, I was to make myself entirely at home and Mrs. Bedford would look after me.

After dinner I watched a play on TV, had a final nightcap, told myself that I would rub up my lecture notes next day, and went to bed.

I say that at two o'clock or thereabouts I woke up in a sweat and saw something happening in the room; *you* say that I was dreaming.

OK, then, I was dreaming. And what I dreamed was this:

I was looking at the room, at the very bed in which I was lying; but I wasn't lying in it any more, a middle-aged woman was.

She was obviously ill. The room was a sick room. Bottles—medicines and tablets—by the bed and all the usual paraphernalia of illness about.

With the extraordinary intensity of dream vision and apprehension I was aware of how ill the woman in the bed was. I could *feel* the hot sweat pouring out of her forehead. I knew how desperately hard it was for her to get each breath. She was on the slope of living and might, or might not, come up to the top of it again.

Within seconds as I watched, horrified yet fascinated, it was decided for her.

The door opened and a nurse came in. Young, hardlooking in a way, yet attractive; very definitely attractive.

She picked up a pillow, forced it down over the head of the woman who was already fighting for every breath and held it there with all her might.

I screamed but it was a dream scream; nobody heard it.

The good looking young nurse held the pillow down grimly. She had a job because when people fight for life they fight hard. But she was young and fit, the woman in the bed (my bed) was middle-aged and already ill.

Presently the nurse drew the pillow away and looked closely down at her victim.

She was satisfied. She smiled.

I had seen murder done; but had it been committed or was it going to be committed? Which way had the cogs of time's wheel slipped for me, backwards or forwards?

My host and hostess arrived, full of apologies and amiability, during the morning. I was on the terrace to meet them. Sir XY a distinguished 65; his wife 30 years younger I would say.

No stranger to me, of course, I had seen her in my dream. The nurse. No possible doubt of it. I knew her instantly. She was the murderess. She smiled at me delightfully. I think she was pleased to have another man in the house. A man twenty years younger than her husband.

Afterwards at the wine and cheese party (which is how these festivals are run) a woman who had enjoyed my talk told me about Sir XY and his lady.

She was his second wife; the first Lady XY had died three years ago and after rather a short interval Sir XY had married the nurse. Romantic, wasn't it? she said.

So I came back from Shropshire rather more thoughtful than I had gone there. I have been sitting in my study thinking it all out: in fact I have only just put down the telephone. Lady XY rang me up from a London hotel.

She is up in town on her own for a few days shopping and would so like to renew our too brief acquaintance. Is there any chance of our meeting?

Life can be complicated can't it? Like I said earlier on. All right, *you* tell *me* what to do.

WORLD POLICE SCHOOL

Sixty-eight police officials from seventeen nations graduated this fall from the International Police Academy in Washington, were warned by M. V. Forrestal, a senior staff member of the National Security Council, that they were stepping right into the "front line of preserving world peace" in view of the increasing importance of the policeman in quelling "civil disobedience and insurrection".

The Academy, opened in December, 1963, and operated by the Agency for International Development to train police leaders in developing nations, had students from Latin America and from Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, the Philippines, Somali Republic, Tanganyika, United Arab Republic and Uganda.

the diamond noose

by Philip Ketchum

THE DETECTIVE was a young-old man, tall, thin, grey-eyed, not unpleasant in appearance. He was not friendly but neither was he antagonistic. He could smile and occasionally he did. His name was Ed Kiley.

His voice was almost casual as he asked, "You are Lisa Compton?"

She nodded, still shaky, dazed by what had happened. It was hard to credit the scene she had walked into, her father dead in the next room, the entire apartment turned into a shambles—just as though a cyclone had ripped through it.

"I would guess you are about twenty-three," the detective said.

"Twenty-five," Lisa said.

"You didn't live with your father?"

"No. I have an apartment at the Sherman Arms."

"Married?"

"No, but——"

The detective nodded. "I can guess—there is a young man. With a girl as attractive as you, there is bound to be someone interested in you. Could be there

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Phil Ketchum and Cornell Woolrich never met, in the thirties and in the years afterwards, when both were names to conjure with in this field. One evening, a year or two ago, both did finally meet and sat talking for hours about the old Black Mask days, the days when there were — so it seemed — innumerable markets for writers in the genre . . . ***H.S.S.***

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are several."

"Just one," Lisa said. "But I don't want him involved in this. I mean——"

"We'll probably run into him," the detective said. "Now, let me see. You got here just before noon, your father didn't answer the buzzer so you tried the door. It was unlocked. You opened it and looked in at—at what's in the other room."

Lisa took a quick, deep breath. She stiffened, shut her eyes, tried to blot out the scene. She wished Bob was here. She needed his encouragement, his strength. But there was no reason he had to go through something like this. It might have embarrassed his parents. The story of her father's death would be splashed through the newspapers and the Thatchers had a wholesome dislike for publicity.

The detective was speaking again. "From the appearance of the apartment, the person or persons responsible for your father's death, must have been searching for something—papers, money or something of value. Do you have any idea what it might have been?"

She bit her lips. "No."

"Did your father usually have quite a bit of money on hand?"

"No."

"Then—valuable papers of some sort?"

"No."

"Jewelry?"

She looked at the floor, clenched her hands tightly. "No."

"It's got to be something," the detective said. "Some object of art?"

"No."

The detective scowled down at her. "You're not helping me. Unless this entire scene has been staged, someone came here to get something from your father. I want to know what it was. I want to know if it was found and taken away—or if it is still here."

Her voice was low. "I—I don't know. Father didn't collect things. He had money but he never carried much with him. If he had valuable papers he would have put them in a safe place—maybe a safe deposit box. And as for jewellery—he never cared much for jewelry."

"How long has your mother been dead?"

"Seven years."

"No one has taken her place?"

"At least—no one moved in. Father had one or two close friends—women—but that's all."

"How about enemies?"

"No."

"He had a business partner."

"Yes. George Dawes. They've been friends for years."

A uniformed policeman appeared at the door. "The wagon's here for the body, Sergeant Kiley. The lab men, too."

"Good," the detective said.

"How would you like to take Miss Compton to her apartment? It's the Sherman Arms."

"Glad to," the policeman said.

The detective looked down at her. "I think you need something to eat—and a good long rest. I'll probably see you later in the day. Do you have a friend who could stay with you?"

Lisa reached for handbag. "I'll be all right. What will they do with my father's—I mean——"

"We'll talk about that when I see you."

She stood up. "Your name is——"

"Sergeant Kiley—Ed Kiley."

She nodded, turned away, and she had to go through the next room but she tried not to see the men there, or the sheet-covered figure on the floor. Someone walked beside her—a policeman. She did not know his name but he took her briskly through the crowd in the corridor, the smaller crowd in the lobby below, and then to a double parked police car in the street. As she was getting in some woman on the sidewalk called out, "There she is—the blonde who killed him. They're taking her to the station house."

"Some woman—sounding off," the policeman said. "Don't worry, Miss Compton."

The policeman took her all the way to her apartment in the Sherman Arms. He offered to get anything she needed but she said she didn't need anything, and closed and locked the door. Then, in the privacy of her bedroom she reached into the bosom of her dress and withdrew the diamond necklace she had hidden there. It was beautiful—and it was worth more than a hundred thousand dollars. *One hundred thousand dollars!* It was hard to comprehend how much that was. Her father had never been generous—with her. She had never had more than a few hundred dollars at a time—and never any real jewellery. But now she did. A diamond necklace, or a hundred thousand dollars. She could make her choice, and she would. Very definitely, this part of her father's estate would never fall into the hands of Isabel Montez.

She put the diamonds in the bottom drawer of the chest, walked to the kitchen and made coffee, and just as she poured it, the telephone rang. The suddenness of it startled her, made her jump, but then she put the coffee cup aside and hurried to answer the call, almost sure it would be Bob on the other end of the line.

She was wrong. The low, sultry voice she heard was Isabel's. "Darling—I've just heard it over the radio. It isn't true—it can't be."

"But it is," Lisa said.

"Oh, no—no—no——"

Her voice was shaky, frightened. Or was she acting? How honest was Isabel Montez? How phoney? Lisa pictured the woman in her mind. A very young forty, her body well cared for. She walked erect and with an undeniable grace, olive-skinned, Spanish, but she spoke with hardly a trace of accent. She had black eyes, black hair—and the manners of a courtesan. Lisa's father had fallen under Isabels' spell—but maybe he had wanted to. In buying her, maybe he had known what he was buying.

Isabel was speaking again, hesitantly but still with a sense of urgency. "Lisa—Lisa, can I come over to see you—for just a minute. I've—I've got to. I won't stay long."

Lisa frowned at the telephone. She had never liked Isabel. She did not want to have to comfort her—but then, maybe that was not why she wanted to see her.

"Please, Lisa," Isabel begged. "Just for a minute."

"All right," Lisa said. "But I don't feel very—steady."

"I'll be there right away," Isabel said, and hung up the telephone.

Lisa walked back to the kitchen. She sat down in the breakfast nook, sipped her coffee, and wondered about Isabel and her father. She was not exactly sure how long they had known each other, but for the past six months they had been almost inseparable. They had taken a number of week-end trips. They might even have been married. At least they had planned on it. And without any question, the diamond necklace had been intended for Isabel.

The telephone rang again. This time she was sure it would be Bob—and it was. His voice had the quality of seeming to reach across the wires and into the apartment, almost as though his person was there, to shield her, protect her. "Lisa—Lisa, I'm so terribly sorry. Is there anything I can do? Do you want me to come over?"

She wanted to shout, yes—yes—but she didn't She made a pretence of courage. "I'm all right, Bob. If you can come over later I wish you would, but in a few minutes, Isabel will be here."

"Isabel!" He exploded over the name. "Why did you have to call her?"

"I didn't call her. She called me."

"Lock her out."

Lisa smiled. There had never been any question of Bob's attitude toward Isabel. He didn't care for her at all. On several occasions he had declared that Isabel would destroy anyone she touched, man or woman. He referred to her as the Black Widow.

"I can't lock her out." Lisa said, "After all, she and father——"

"Then get rid of her as soon as you can."

"I will, Bob."

"Good," Bob said, and then his voice lowered. "I love you, Lisa. Take care of yourself."

She could feel the warmth of his words, and they were helpful, strengthening. Her answer was whispered. "Tell me tonight."

"Don't ever worry, I will," Bob said, and hung up.

Almost at once the telephone rang again. Who might be calling this time she could not guess, and when she answered she was vaguely surprised to hear George Dawes' voice. He sounded shocked. "Lisa—Lisa—I can't believe it. I can't think of anyone who could have done such a thing, unless—Lisa, can I come over and see you?"

"Why—why I suppose so," Lisa said. "Will tomorrow——"

"I'm coming over right away," George said.

"Right away!" Lisa gasped. "But——"

The line clicked dead and as she hung up she felt suddenly uneasy. Why did George have to rush over here so quickly. He was not a precipitous person, but slow, deliberate, careful. It was not characteristic of him to act this way.

Lisa walked to her bedroom. She looked in the bottom drawer of her chest, took out the diamond necklace, stared at it. Was this why her father had died—this handful of sparkling jewels? Were these worth a life? Not really, of course. But to some people a single diamond might have been worth a life. Her hands started shaking. She turned, stooped over, and slipped the diamonds between the mattress and the springs of her bed. And she thought, *This means I'm frightened—that I'm hiding them just as father did. But, of course, no one knows I have them.*

Within ten minutes Isabel appeared at the door, and she looked tragic. Her face seemed older, her eyes were red from crying. To Lisa, she had always seemed a rather competent, assured person, but she exhibited none of those traits this afternoon. She wasn't even standing straight. Her shoulders sagged.

"It was good of you to let me come," she murmured, heading for a chair, dropping into it. "I wonder if I could have a—drink?"

"Gin and tonic?" Lisa suggested.

"Anything, Lisa, I—I don't know what's going to happen to me now."

Lisa was fairly sure of what would happen to her. Isabel would find another man very easily. In less than a week, probably, she would wipe away her grief. Lisa fixed a drink for Isabel, took

it to her, and sat down.

Isabel sipped the drink then looked at her. "I wonder if you would do something for me?"

"If I can," Lisa nodded.

"A few days ago your father gave me a necklace, but the clasp was broken. He had to have it fixed. This morning he called and said it was ready. He was going to give it to me tonight. Now—he can't. I'd—I'd like to have it as a—as a momento."

"A hundred thousand dollar momento," Lisa said.

Isabel had stiffened. Her eyes definitely had narrowed, hardened. But that was a quick reaction and it was quickly hidden. She shook her head. "A hundred thousand dollars—don't be silly. It wasn't a diamond necklace. The stones were zircons, possibly worth a few hundred."

"They sparkle like diamonds," Lisa said.

"Then you have them——"

She shook her head. "No."

"But if you've seen them—"

"Father told me about them."

"Surely he didn't say they were diamonds."

"No, but——"

"You do have them, don't you? It said over the radio that you found your father's body—so you could have taken them. I mean——"

"You mean I stole them?"

Isabel spoke slowly, her eyes thoughtful. "I'm not sure what I mean. If I was——"

Her purse was on the floor, leaning against her chair. Now, she reached for it, lifted it into her lap, opened it, felt inside, then withdrew her hand. *And in her hand was a gun!* A small, black, stubby-barrelled gun. She lifted it and pointed it at Lisa.

"What—what are you doing that for?" Lisa gasped.

"I want that necklace," Isabel said. "Where is it?"

Lisa had never imagined herself in a situation like this. She was suddenly frightened. There was a gun in Isabel's hand, pointed straight at her. It could explode, kill her. She didn't want to believe such a thing could happen—but she knew it could.

"The necklace," Isabel said, and her voice was harsh. "Get it—now."

Lisa moistened her lips. "I—I——"

She broke off, jerked her eyes toward the door. The buzzer had sounded. Someone was outside—George Dawes, her father's business associate and closest friend. She had been surprised he wanted to see her right away, hadn't wanted him to come, but now she was glad he was at the door.

The buzzer sounded again, and in its echo, Isabel spoke. "Just be quiet. Don't answer the door. Whoever is out there will get discouraged and leave."

"But he won't," Lisa said. "I'm

sure it's George Dawes. He telephoned right after you, said he would be right over."

The buzzer sounded again, and again, and Isabel frowned. She looked at her gun, lowered it, put it in her purse. "All right, let him in—but if you trust him you're a fool."

Lisa felt a sudden relief. She didn't like George, never had. But at least he would be an insurance against Isabel. She hurried to the door, opened it, and George came in, a short, stocky man, almost fat. He had puffy, pink cheeks, deep-buried eyes, was fifty and bald. He had thick, moist hands. They reached for Lisa's and he said, "This is a tragic thing—tragic. I just want you to know——" He broke off, looked across Lisa's shoulder, saw Isabel and muttered, "What's she doing here?"

"She's threatening me," Lisa said, and she turned to look at Isabel. "She wants a necklace which belonged to my father."

"In a way, that's why I'm here," George said.

"It's my necklace," Isabel said sharply.

George shook his head. "It might have been meant for you, but it was bought with company funds—so in reality, it belongs to me. You're out of luck."

"Not yet," Isabel said. "Do you have it?"

George looked at Lisa. "Where is the necklace?"

"I—I don't know," Lisa said.

She had stepped aside so they made a triangle, she, Isabel and George. It had occurred to her that George was no insurance. He was in the same classification as Isabel. He didn't care about her. All he wanted was the necklace.

Isabel was speaking. "She says she doesn't know where the necklace is—but she's lying. She found her father's body, grabbed the necklace, and foolishly, the police didn't search her or they would have held her."

George rubbed his hands together. He was staring at her sharply. "Is that true, Lisa?"

She shook her head. "No."

"Your father had the necklace, I know," George said. "He had it at the office, showed it to me before he left to go to his apartment. He said he meant to show it to you. I asked him if he had a safe place to keep it and he said he did—a place known only to his daughter. It was later that I discovered his accounts were short. That's why I want the necklace."

"He gave it to me," Isabel said, and she was holding her gun in her hand.

"What do you mean to do with that?" George asked.

"Use it—if I have to," Isabel said. "And I——"

The door buzzer sounded again

—and again and again.

"Who's that, Lisa?" George asked.

"I—I don't know," Lisa said. But she didn't mean that really. She was almost sure it was Bob at the door. She had asked him to come later—but he loved her and was worried about her and had come early.

The buzzer kept sounding.

Isabel spoke under her breath. "If that buzzer keeps sounding off, you'll have to answer it, George. Send whoever it is, away. If you can't I've still got this gun."

"You and your gun," George muttered.

He hesitated but the buzzer kept sounding and finally he turned to the door, unlocked it, opened it a crack. Then he stepped back as Bob Thatcher pushed into the room, a scowling young man, tall, sandy-haired—and puzzled. He stared at George, at Isabel who had put away her gun, at Lisa, and he moved toward Lisa, put a protective arm around her shoulder. His question was harsh. "What's going on here?"

"We were—talking," George said.

"Talking about what?" Bob asked.

George smiled. "We were talking about Lisa's father—and what a tragic thing has happened."

"No, they've been talking about a necklace," Lisa said.

"A necklace?" Bob said. "What necklace?"

George hesitated, and Isabel was silent.

"They've been talking about a valuable necklace," Lisa said. "Isabel wants it—and she has a gun in her purse. George wants it—and I don't know whether he has a gun or not."

"I have one," George said, and he drew it from his pocket, pointed it in the general direction of Lisa and Bob. Isabel reached for hers.

Bob seemed too shocked to say anything but Lisa had been under tension long enough to be a little inured to the strain of the afternoon. She spoke slowly. "Isabel wants the necklace. George wants it. Each has a gun. I wonder what would happen if I went and got it and threw it on the floor."

For a moment no one spoke. George took a quick look at Isabel. She took a quick look at him.

"We'd better make a deal," George said.

Isabel took a deep breath. "What kind of deal?"

"Fifty-fifty," George said.

"No," Isabel said. "I want it all."

George grated out the words. "Then you get nothing."

"It was meant for me," Isabel said. "Why should I give you anything?"

As they were watching each other, measuring each other, Bob lowered his head, whispered to Lisa: "Where is the necklace?"

She barely moved her lips. "In the bedroom."

"Hidden?"

"At least it's not out in sight."

"Is there a bolt on the door?"

"Yes."

George must have noticed they were whispering. He stepped nearer. "What are you two whispering about?"

"I was asking her about the necklace," Bob said. Then he smiled crookedly. "Why not? If it's worth it, maybe I'll ask for a cut."

"You don't rate it," George said.

"But I'm here. What are you going to do about me? If you want to get the necklace you can't leave bodies all about. The police wouldn't like it."

George scowled, hesitated, then looked at Isabel. "He's got a point. What are we going to do with him? What are you going to do with me? I can promise you this—I won't just stand here and let you walk off with the necklace. Bob won't either. How about a three way cut?"

Isabel motioned with her gun. "No. The jewels were meant for me. You knew it, George. Lisa knew it. If her father was still alive——"

"Wait a minute," Lisa said. She had straightened, and she looked from Isabel to George—and back to Isabel. "Which one of you killed him?"

"Not me," Isabel said. "Your father and I were going to have dinner tonight. He would have given me the necklace. I'm the last person in the world who would have wanted him hurt."

"Not if you had learned he was through with you," George said.

"But that didn't happen."

Lisa shifted her attention to George. "How about you?"

"Don't be silly," George answered, and he sounded almost angry. "For years your father has been one of my closest friends. I'm sick about what happened."

"But not too sick to want to pick up a necklace my father owned," Lisa said.

He shook his head. "I told you I have just discovered a shortage in your father's accounts. If I could get the necklace, and sell it, I could cover up the shortage. This would save your father's reputation."

"But you could have followed my father to his apartment."

"I could—or for that matter Isabel might have been there—waiting."

Isabel's laugh was harsh. "I could have been there—but I wasn't. And we are wasting time. I want the necklace. Lisa——"

Bob interrupted. "Let me talk to her."

"Why?"

"Just let me talk to her. Are you—are you really going to use that gun?"

"If I have to—yes," Isabel said. "But I don't think I'll have to. I don't think Lisa wants to die. She's too young."

Bob turned to whisper to Lisa. His first words were very low. "Argue with me, start walking. When we get close to the bedroom door, we'll scoot inside." Then he spoke a little louder. "Why not give them the jewels—let Isabel and George fight over them."

Lisa backed away—backed toward the bedroom door. "No, why should they get the jewels?"

"They won't keep them long," Bob said. "The police will be after them—or whoever gets away with them."

Lisa took another step toward the bedroom door, and another. Over Bob's shoulder she could see George and Isabel, edging after them, but they had to keep apart, had to watch each other. It occurred to her that the moment she fled to the bedroom, either George or Isabel might shoot at her, *but more possibly, each one might wait for the other.* And if they hesitated enough, she and Bob would gain the security of the bedroom. In time, George or Isabel could break in the door, but before then she and Bob could escape down the fire-escape.

Bob was still talking to her. "I don't want you hurt. Give them the necklace, Lisa. There's nothing else——"

"Now!" Lisa cried, and she twisted around, scrambled for the bedroom.

George yelled at her, Isabel shouted something, and for an instant Lisa's back was tensed against the shock of a bullet. But there were no shots. Bob, rushing after her, bumped against her, hurled her into the bedroom, but just inside he stopped, caught the door, slammed it, and locked it. He made it just in time. Someone in the front room, probably George, lunged against the door as Bob was fastening the lock.

He looked around at her, grinned, his eyes excited, and he said, "Lisa, we've made it. Grab the jewels—we'll get away down the fire-escape."

She motioned to the extension telephone on the bedstand. "I want to call the police first. They might get here before George and Isabel leave."

Bob shook his head. "No chance in the world."

There was another thud at the bedroom door—another, but the door held. Lisa looked that way hesitantly.

"Get the jewels and let's get away from here," Bob said.

She looked at him. "Which one did it—killed my father?"

"George, most likely. Had to be a man to move the heavy furniture in his apartment. We'd better get away while we can. Where are the diamonds?"

Lisa turned toward the bed, but then stopped. *Bob had asked about the diamonds, but not once since he had been here had anyone said anything about diamonds. They had spoken of jewels and of a necklace, but that was all.*

She looked around at him. "Bob, did you come here straight from the office?"

"Of course—but what's that got to do with it? If we don't get away from here——"

She moistened her lips. "Bob, how did you know the heavy furniture in my father's apartment had been moved?"

"It said over the radio the place had been searched."

"But did it say the heavy furniture had been moved? Did it——?"

His eyes had a strange look, hard, glittering. They stared out at her out of a face she suddenly didn't know, a tight, unsmiling face. Stern, unfriendly, angry. His lips had turned thin. "Where are the diamonds?"

She shook her head. "I—I don't know."

He stepped toward her, gripped her shoulders. "Lisa, where are they? I want them—*now!*"

"You killed him, didn't you?"

"Lisa—where did you hide them? We don't have much time."

"You were being friendly to my father," Lisa said. "I thought it was because you loved me and were being kind to my father. Maybe that was part of it, but when you heard of the diamond necklace you decided it was worth more than me."

There were shouting sounds in the front room, possibly George and Isabel settling their rivalry, but Lisa scarcely thought about that. Her mind had been sharp a moment ago. It wasn't anymore. She could feel Bob's fingers digging into her flesh. She looked into his face, a menacing face—a stranger. But how could that happen so quickly? She had been in love with him—with Bob Thatcher—if this was still him. And it was—but it was a side of his character she had never seen before.

He was shouting at her. "Lisa—I want the diamonds!"

He drew one hand away, slapped her across the face. She stumbled away, fell across the bed. And she expected he would follow her but he didn't. The parlour door had splintered open. He looked that way, raced for the window. That was as far as he got. Two policemen caught him.

Another policeman came in—and a detective—Ed Kiley. He

looked at her, scowling, looked at Bob, who was well under control, and looked at her again. "You all right, Miss Compton?"

She nodded, and suddenly she was tired—terribly tired. She wished everyone would go away but she knew that wouldn't happen right away.

"Where is the necklace?" Ed Kiley asked.

Lisa got it, handed it to the detective. And they might have been very valuable but after only a glance at them he dropped them into his pocket.

"Now, what about him?" he asked, pointing to Bob.

Lisa looked away. "He's the one who—who killed my father."

"That's a lie," Bob said. "You can't prove a thing."

"If you are guilty, we'll prove it," the detective said. And he gave an order to the men holding Bob Thatcher. "Take him to headquarters. Hold him until I get there."

Lisa motioned toward the parlour. "George Dawes and Isabel Montez just wanted the necklace."

"And each one had a gun, which is hardly legal," the detective said. "I'll probably be rough with them, then let them go. But they're on their way to headquarters. Didn't I tell you to rest?"

"It didn't work out that way," Lisa said. "I made some coffee but it must be cold by now."

"Lie down," Ed Kiley said. "I'll make more coffee, then we'll talk again. Got to do this, anyhow." He walked to the door, stopped, looked back. Bob and the two policemen were gone and from the sounds, everyone else was gone.

"Is something wrong?" Lisa asked.

The detective frowned at her. "Most men aren't like that fellow we just took away. Even cops aren't too bad. Who's going to look after you now?"

"I can take care of myself," Lisa said.

"We'll talk about that," Ed Kiley said, and disappeared in the direction of the kitchen.

Lisa leaned back, closed her eyes. Right now it was impossible to think, clearly, but it was rather nice to have someone looking after her, even though Ed was here on an official visit. Then, maybe, she would need someone to help her forget Bob. That was something to consider.

She closed her eyes and waited for the coffee.

the temptation of a marquis

by John Stephens

THE Vicomte Charles Henri Louis Philippe Marie Victor Romulus de Bazin de Corbeuf, Marquis de Chateauville, was a famous French writer a hundred years ago. His collected works, 23 volumes of them,* plus the three volumes of his collected letters,** are to be found in the better and less accessible libraries. Quite independent, and reasonably honest in his Tory Liberalism, the Marquis never succeeded in being too much loved by his fellow men, and had even less luck as far as the ladies were concerned. In addition to being rather on the lean side, he was also inclined to talk a lot about himself. . . .

He did have some good points, though, one thing being his well-known interest in the Turks. Gradually he came to know more about Greece and Turkey than did the Turks of those days themselves, and he is said to have done more, in his day, towards putting Turkey on the map, than

*Paris, 1851-77. (Publication interrupted in 1864 at the request of the Emperor, who objected strongly to De Chateauville's analysis of the background of the 1848 revolution. See Vol. 17, p. 371 ff.)

**Paris, 1901. Edited by his nephew, the Marquis De Chateauville, deputy from Corbeuf.

Life wasn't too different in grandfather's day, to judge from John Stephens' account of the troubles of the Marquis de Chateauville, and George McWatter's account, elsewhere in this issue, of a 19th century confidence man. The manners were different. That was all. . . . *H.S.S.*

ten Turkish Ambassadors had done during the preceding century. In 1840 the Caliph, receiving him in audience, is actually said to have addressed him as "dearly beloved Brother!"

This is why.

Ten years earlier young De Chateauville was traveling for his health, at the suggestion of the current Minister of State in charge of Censorship who was a third cousin on his mother's side, twice removed. This was an age when it was still fashionable to travel "for your health"—your political health — even if you were capable of eating three-inch steaks at breakfast and drinking two bottles of wine with the steak. (Chateauville, though skinny, was no exceptiion.)

Custom being custom in those days when Lord Byron's memory was still green, he eventually found himself in Greece, at that time a country that was not on too good terms with the Turks. Even in the section where he went, where the revolutionary tendency was supposed to be less strong, they had found a nine-year-old boy writing on a convenient wall that happened to belong to the Under-Inspector of the Clerical Police, "A dead Turk a day will keep the tax collector away. . . ."

After having been officially sick for almost two years, Chateauville finally did become ill. To give him credit though, he took good care to fall sick near a comfortable house where the people could speak French, and, since he came to like several things about the little town, he stayed on and on and on. . . .

His host and his hostess and he used to take walks in the garden in the evening, accompanied by the host's younger sister, Laila. It wouldn't have been proper for his hosts to walk with a dirty foreigner in the streets, but in the gardens—well, that was another matter; only the police, and the secret service, and the tax collector's spies and the Minister of Police's personal agents and the representatives of the religious bodies and some of the more nosy neighbors would know . . . If they'd walked in the streets, well then everybody would have known.

Chateauville was thirty-two then. Laila was fifteen, and getting to be an old maid. Chateauville, even then, wore a wig; Laila wore her hair down to her knees, as all nice girls in all nice countries used to do. Maybe it wasn't comfortable in summer, but it WAS modest.

Chateauville was a little near-sighted, and was wearing the rather startling looking glasses that were being introduced at the time in the best circles. They

were large and black-rimmed and not too light. . . .; Laila could see for miles around—she had eyes like a hawk.

Chateauville, in addition to talking a lot about himself, had still another vice—he took himself very seriously. . . . He could dance, yes—he could dance the slow stately dances that Metternich and the Czar had both loved at the Congress of Vienna, but he definitely felt that the waltz, on the other hand, was a very immoral dance indeed—it just wasn't the sort of dance you did in public! Laila, on the other hand, was fifteen years old—not thirty-two; she didn't have rheumatism—she had the Turkish version of Mexican jumping beans in her feet. . . . She once tried to teach him a local style dance where you sort of gripped your partner 'round the waist, took a firm hold, and then started turning and whirling and whirling. . . . Chateauville was the first to blush.

Greece in those years was no different from any other country, then or now. If a boy should want to talk to a girl, there would always be ways of doing it—ways of getting around regulations. His host and hostess used to talk about it sometimes, late at night, when it was too warm to sleep. His hostess would turn to his host and shake him a little so he'd wake up, and then she would say—"What IS the matter with your friend anyway?" Being a man, and to be a man in Greece and the Levant a hundred years ago meant a number of things, he would open one eye, glare at his wife, mutter "Bah!", and turn over and go to sleep again. If she persisted, he might push her out of the bed, or even beat her a little; the beating wouldn't be too serious, but if he hadn't beat her she might have been worried and begun to suspect he was beating some other woman the nights he wasn't coming home early. . . .

So Monsieur de Chateauville's affairs went on very slowly—very slowly, indeed. Finally, though, he received a letter from Paris that had only been five months on the road, in which his cousin wrote to ask if he really did mean to come back to Paris some day (it seems the King had forgotten the unpleasant incident at the Theatre), and besides this Adeline and Grace and Marie-Louise and the Princess had all been asking for him. . . . Solemnly, seriously, glasses on his nose, he read through the letter that late afternoon as he and Laila were sitting under the trees in the garden, his host and hostess sitting hopefully some distance away, and Laila, as was proper, sitting eighteen inches away from him. . . .

He finished the letter and turned to Laila who, as all nice girls should do, was sitting looking at a point over in the other end of the garden. She had a very demure smile on her face, as if she was thinking of something very funny. Chateauville found himself wondering whether she was laughing at him,—he knew he wasn't terribly exciting. He found himself wondering about the way her brother and sister-in-law seemed to favor him—did she really like him or didn't she? The trouble was that half of the time she could be so polite, the rest of the time she seemed to sit there and mock him with that smile that could mean so many things. . . .

It was getting dusk, and still they were sitting there.

He hadn't said anything.

She hadn't said anything.

Nobody had said anything. The birds weren't saying anything. The only sound in the quiet of the evening was the murmur of the brook beyond the wall. . . .

Chateauville found himself wondering what he should do. Should he move his arm very slowly across those eighteen inches—should he? If this had been his cousin's garden, well then, of course, there wouldn't have been eighteen inches of green separating them, but then there wouldn't have been any Laila either. . . . He looked at her again.

She was still smiling. What was she thinking about anyway? Was she thinking about him? Or was she thinking about that young ox who came to call at the house every other day and just sat and stared at where he knew the girl was—sometimes he would be there for more than two hours—after which he would rise silently and go. . . . Or was she thinking about the Assistant Deputy-Chief of Police, who, as Chateauville knew, had recently propositioned his hosts about Laila; it's true he had two wives already, but they were in Constantinople, and he needed somebody to order his servants around here.

There he sat, a Marquis of France, thirty-two years old, a literary failure and (though few knew it except his creditors) a financial as well as political bankrupt. And had rheumatism too! And there she sat, fifteen years old, young, vital, with a lifetime ahead of her. . . . In the moments when he could think rationally, he would find himself hoping she'd marry someone who wouldn't beat her too much, someone who wouldn't tame and destroy that spark in her which was the privilege of youth. His own youth had been so different and so harder, in a way, than this girl's. Then the next minute

he would wish HE could beat her, and, to hide his feelings, he'd start reading her some of his own poetry, or lines and more lines from the new play he was working on, and he would become lost under the spell of his own words. . . . He would never notice the way she'd turn towards him then, and never hear the silent comment—softer than a whisper—"What a strange man this is! Is this the way they make love in his country, with words?"

Well, there he sat, with eighteen inches of grass that looked up from underneath his cloak that he'd thrown on the ground for them to sit on. Eighteen inches of grass looked up at him with bright green eyes, malicious eyes, eyes that seemed to laugh at him. . . .

It was dark in the garden now, and he realized he couldn't read her anything more from the book he had with him, he wouldn't be able to see the lines. He looked towards her a little hesitatingly—she was still looking over in the other end of the garden. He moved one leg, cautiously—apparently she didn't hear him. He moved the other leg a little less cautiously—and still she made no sign of hearing anything.

The deputy-spy from the Ministry of Police who was supposed to keep an eye on this strange foreigner—the deputy-spy, hiding behind the bushes that the girl had been looking at, was wondering if she had seen him. . . . The assistant-agent for the detection of anti-Government ideas, who'd been sent up specially from Constantinople to keep an eye on this foreigner who wasn't too popular with his own Government, moved a cramped leg and swore softly. Sitting up in the tree wasn't comfortable; his leg was going to sleep on him.

But Laila and Chateauville knew nothing about all this. Well, maybe Laila, hearing the movement in the branches as the agent shifted his position a trifle, *did* guess, but she wouldn't have upset her man for anything; all women know how silly men behave when they get angy. Laila, being Laila, was content to sit and wait. . . .

Ten minutes had passed since he had moved his legs—and everything remained quiet. He began to wonder if he could attack now. Just as he began to move his arm very, very slowly behind her, she turned, though, and he stopped—arm half extended. She was speaking. She was beginning to feel chilly.

The words of an old song about a woman who is feeling chilly came to him—but he reproached himself immediately.

Laila was a young and innocent girl who wouldn't be likely to know of such songs. . . . She was still looking at him, expectantly, though—and what could he do? She looked at his coat and then she looked at him. . . .

He began to get a very chokey feeling up in his throat. If he had lived in other circles he might have said to himself then, "now or never". He took off his coat very slowly and very carefully—so as not to disarrange the lace—and then leaned over the fewer inches of green to put the coat around her shoulders.

Somehow she was leaning against his arm one minute—and somehow—the next minute—well—we will draw a polite curtain over that.

When he was kissing her for the third time—more energetically this time—he felt her leg strike out against something, and heard a soft thud. She had kicked the book he had brought with him.

He found himself wondering why. . . .

SO YOU WANT TO BREAK OUT OF JAILS!

Specialists in the rather unique profession of *preventing* jail breaks always feel that attempts are perhaps more interesting—and revealing—than the breaks themselves.

There was the time the girl friend of one prisoner slipped him a piece of piano wire. He used this to cut through steel which had tool resistant pellets inside. Whenever he hit one of these he put fat, stolen from the prison kitchen, on the wire, which then cut around the pellet.

Another prisoner used two wires taken from the electric light source to cut a hole in the ceiling. (Don't ask us how this was done, please! We don't know!) He managed to cut his way out—into another cell above him. . . .

There was an unusual demand for pencils in one prison. Finally a guard saw a prisoner grind the lead, mix it with the paint scraped from the outside of the pencil, stuffing the mixture into the keyhole of his cell block. And then he lit it.

He broke the lock of course. So they transferred him to a nice, new cell where there was no keyhole on the lock. . . .

And there was the time when an anonymous donor sent a gift of books to a prison library, and one inmate suddenly discovered an interest in reading. He was caught sawing his cell bars. The saw had been sewn into the covers of one of the books.

dead phone

by Poul and Karen Anderson

That was an evil autumn, when the powers bared their teeth across an island in the Spanish Main and it seemed the world might burn. Afterward Americans looked at each other with a kind of wonder, and for a while they walked more straight. But whatever victory they had gained was soon taken away from them.

As if to warn, a fortnight earlier the weather ran amok. On the Pacific coast, gale force winds flung sea against land, day and night without end, and rainfall in northern California redressed the balance of a three-year drought in less than a week. At the climax of it, the hills around San Francisco Bay started to come down in mudslides that took houses and human bodies along, and the streets of some towns were turned into rivers.

Trygve Yamamura sat up late. His wife had taken the children to visit her cousin in the Mother Lode country over the Columbus Day weekend. His work kept him behind; so now he prowled the big hollow house on the Berkeley steps, smoked

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Poul Anderson is the author of more than a dozen novels, mostly adventure stories set in the future, such as the forthcoming STAR FOX, the genuinely excellent HIGH CRUSADE, and TRADER TO THE STARS (all Doubleday), and of three novels about Trygve Yamamura, PERISH BY THE SWORD, MURDER IN BLACK LETTER, and MURDER BOUND (all Macmillan).

one pipe after another, listened to the wind and the rain lashing his roof and to the radio whose reports grew ever more sinister, and could not sleep.

Oh, yes, he told himself often and often, he was being foolish. They had undoubtedly arrived without trouble and were now snug at rest. In any event, he could do nothing to help, he was only exhausting himself, in violation of his entire philosophy. Tomorrow morning the phone line that had snapped, somewhere in those uplands, would be repaired, and he would hear their voices. But meanwhile his windowpanes were holes of blackness, and he started when a broken tree branch crashed against the wall.

He sought his basement gym and tried to exercise himself into calm. That didn't work either, simply added a different kind of weariness. He was worn down, he knew, badly in need of a vacation, with no immediate prospect of one. His agency had too many investigations going for him to leave the staff unsupervised.

He was also on edge because through various connections he knew more about the Cuban situation that had yet gotten into the papers. A nuclear showdown was beginning to look all too probable. Yamamura was not a pacifist, even when it came to that kind of war; but no sane man, most especially no man with wife and children, could cooly face abomination.

Toward midnight he surrendered. The Zen techniques had failed, or he had. His eyes felt hot and his brain gritty. He stripped, stood long under the shower, and at last, with a grimace, swallowed a sleeping pill.

The drug took quick hold of his unaccustomed body, but nonetheless he tossed about half awake and half in nightmare. It gibbered through his head, he stumbled among terrors and guilts, the sun had gone black while horrible stars rained down upon him. When the phone beside his bed rang he struck out with his fists and gasped.

Brring! the bell shouted across a light-year of wind and voices, *brring,* come to me, you must you must before that happens which has no name, *brring, brring,* you are damned to come and *brring* me her *brring brring brrRING!*

He struggled to wake. Night strangled him. He could not speak or see, so great was his need of air. Through whirl and seethe he heard a click, then a whistle that went on forever, and he had a moment to think that the noise was not like any in this world, it was as if *he* had a fever or as if nothing was at

the other end of the line except the huntsman wind. His skull resounded with the querning of the planets. Yet when the voice came it was clear, steady, a little slow and very sad—but how remote, how monstrously far away.

"Come to me. It's so dark here."

Yamamura lay stiff in his own darkness.

"I don't understand," said the voice. "I thought . . . afterward I would know everything, or else nothing. But instead I don't understand. Oh, God, but it's lonely!"

For a space only the humming and the chill whistle were heard. Then: "Why did I call you, Trygve Yamamura? For help? What help is there now? You don't even know that we don't understand afterward. Were those pigs that I heard grunting in the forest, and did she come behind them in a black cloak? I'm all alone."

And presently: "Something must be left. I read somewhere once that you don't die in a piece. The last and lowest cells work on for hours. I guess that's true. Because you're still real, Trygve Yamamura." Another pause, as if for the thoughtful shaking of a weary head. "Yes, that must be why I called. What became of me, no, that's of no account any more. But the others. They won't stay real for very long. I had to call while they are, so you can help them. Come."

"Cardynge," Yamamura mumbled.

"No," said the voice. "Goodbye."

The instrument clicked off. Briefly the thin screaming continued along the wires, and then it too died, and nothing remained but the weight in Yamamura's hand.

He became conscious of the storm that dashed against the windows. fumbled around and snapped the lamp switch. The bedroom sprang into existence: warm yellow glow on the walls, mattress springy beneath him and covers tangled above, the bureau with the children's pictures on top. The clock said 1:35. He stared at the receiver before laying it back in its cradle.

"Whoof," he said aloud.

Had he dreamed that call? No, he couldn't have. As full awareness flowed into him, every nerve cried alarm. His lanky, thick-chested frame left the bed in one movement. Yanking the directory from its shelf below the stand, he searched for an address. Yes, here. He took the phone again and dialed.

"Berkeley police," said a tone he recognized.

"Joe? This Trig Yamamura. I think I've got some trouble to report. Client of mine just

rang me up. Damnedest thing I ever heard, made no sense whatsoever, but he seems to be in a bad way and the whole thing suggests—" Yamamura stopped.

"Yes, what?" said the desk officer.

Yamamura pinched his lips together before he said, "I don't know. But you'd better send a car around to have a look."

"Trig, do *you* feel right? Don't you know what's happening outdoors? We may get a disaster call any minute, if a landslide starts, and we've got our hands full as is with emergencies."

"You mean this is too vague?" Yamamura noticed the tension that knotted his muscles. One by one he forced them to relax. "Okay, I see your point," he said. "But you know I don't blow the whistle for nothing, either. Dispatch a car as soon as possible, if you don't hear anything else from me. Meanwhile I'll get over there myself. The place isn't far from here."

"M-m-m . . . well, fair enough, seeing it's you. Who is the guy and where does he live?"

"Aaron Cardynge." Yamamura spelled the name and gave the address he had checked.

"Oh, yeah, I've heard of him. Medium-big importer, isn't he? I guess he wouldn't rouse you without some reason. Go ahead, then, and we'll alert the nearest car to stop by when it can."

"Thanks." Yamamura had started to skin out of his pajamas before he hung up.

He was back into his clothes, with a sweater above, very nearly as fast, and pulled on his raincoat while he kicked the garage door open. The wind screeched at him. When he backed the Volkswagen out, it trembled with that violence. Rain roared on its metal and flooded down the windshield; his headlights and the rare lamps were quickly gulped down by night. Through everything he could hear how water cascaded along the narrow, twisting hill streets and sheeted under his wheels. The brake drums must be soaked, he thought, and groped his way in second gear.

But the storm was something real to fight, that cleansed him of vague horrors. As he drove, with every animal skill at his command, he found himself thinking in a nearly detached fashion.

Why should Cardynge call me? I only met him once. And not about anything dangerous. Was it?

"I'm sorry, Mr. Cardynge," Yamamura said. "This agency doesn't handle divorce work."

The man across the desk shifted in his chair and took out a cigaret case. He was large-

boned, portly, well-dressed, with gray hair brushed back above a rugged face. "I'm not here about that." He spoke not quite steadily and had some difficulty keeping his eyes on the detective's.

"Oh? I beg your pardon. But you told me——"

"Background. I . . . I'd tell a doctor as much as I could, too. So he'd have a better chance of helping me. Smoke?"

"No, thanks. I'm strictly a pipe man." More to put Cardynge at his ease than because he wanted one, Yamamura took a briar off the rack and charged it. "I don't know if we can help. Just what is the problem?"

"To find my son, I said. But you should know why he left and why it's urgent to locate him." Cardynge lit his cigaret and consumed it in quick, nervous puffs. "I don't like exposing my troubles. Believe me. Always made my own way before."

Yamamura leaned back, crossed his long legs, and regarded the other through a blue cloud. "I've heard worse than anything you're likely to have on your mind," he said. "Take your time."

Cardynge's troubled gaze sought the flat half-Oriental countenance before him. "I guess the matter isn't too dreadful at that," he said. "Maybe not even as sordid as it looks from the inside. And it's nearing an end now. But I've got to find Bayard, my boy, soon.

"He's my son by my first marriage. My wife died two years ago. I married Lisette a year later. Indecent haste? I don't know. I'd been so happy before. Hadn't realized how happy, till Maria was gone and I was rattling around alone in the house. Bayard was at the University most of the time, you see. This would be his junior year. He had an apartment of his own. We'd wanted him to, the extra cost was nothing to us and he should have that taste of freedom, don't you think? Afterward . . . he'd have come back to stay with me if I asked. He offered to. But, oh, call it kindness to him, or a desire to carry on what Maria and I had begun, or false pride—I said no, that wasn't necessary, I could get along fine. And I did, physically. Had a housekeeper by day but cooked my own dinner, for something to do. I'm not a bad amateur cook."

Cardynge brought himself up short, stubbed out his cigaret, and lit another. "Not relevant," he said roughly, "except maybe to show why I made my mistake. A person gets lonesome eating by himself.

"Bayard's a good boy. He did what he could for me. Mainly that amounted to visiting me

pretty often. More and more, he'd bring friends from school along. I enjoyed having young people around. Maria and I had always hoped for several children.

"Lisette got included in one of those parties. She was older than the rest, twenty-five, taking a few graduate courses. Lovely creature, witty, well read, captivating manners. I . . . I asked Bayard to be sure and invite her for next time. Then I started taking her out myself. Whirlwind courtship, I suppose. I'm still not sure which of us was the whirlwind, though."

Cardynge scowled. His left hand clenched. "Bayard tried to warn me," he said. "Not that he knew her any too well. But he did know she was one of the—it isn't fashionable to call them beat any more, is it? The kind who spend most of their time hanging around in the coffee shops bragging about what they're going to do someday, and meanwhile cadging their living any way they can. Though that doesn't really describe Lisette either. She turned out to have a good deal more force of character than that bunch. Anyhow, when he saw I was serious, Bayard begged me not to go any further with her. We had quite a fight about it. I married her a couple of days later."

Cardynge made a jerky sort of shrug. "Never mind the details," he said. "I soon learned she was a bitch on wheels. At first, after seeing what happened to our joint checking account, I thought she was simply extravagant. But what she said and did, when I tried to put the brakes on her—! Now I'm morally certain she didn't actually spend most of the money, but socked it away somewhere. I also know she had lovers. She taunted me with that, at the end.

"Before then she drove Bayard out. You can guess how many little ways there are to make a proud, sensitive young man unwelcome in his own father's house. Finally he exploded and told the truth about her, to both our faces. I still felt honor bound to defend her, at least to the extent of telling him to shut up or leave. 'Very well, I'll go," he said, and that was the last I saw of him. Four months back. He simply left town."

"Have you heard anything from him since?" Yamamura asked.

"A short letter from Seattle, some while ago." Cardynge finished his cigaret and extracted a fresh one. "Obviously trying to mend his friendship with me, if not her. He only said he was okay, but the job he'd found was a poor one. He'd heard of better possibilities elsewhere, so he was going to go have a look

and he'd write again when he was settled. I haven't heard yet. I tried to get his current address from his draft board, but they said they weren't allowed to release any such information. So I came to you."

"I see." Yamamura drew on his pipe. "Don't worry too much, Mr. Cardynge. He sounds like a good, steady kid, who'll land on his feet."

"Uh-huh. But I must locate him. You see, Lisette and I separated month before last. Not formally. We . . . we've even seen each other on occasion. She can still be lovely in every way, when she cares to. I've been sending her money, quite a decent sum. But she says she wants to come back."

"Do you want her yourseelf?"

"No. It's a fearful temptation, but I'm too well aware of what the end result would be. So she told me yesterday, if I didn't take her back, she'd file for divorce. And you know what a woman can do to a man in this state."

"Yeah."

"I'm quite prepared to make a reasonable settlement," Cardynge said. "A man ought to pay for his mistakes. But I'll be damned if I'll turn over so much to her that it ruins the business my son was going to inherit."

"Um-m-m . . .are you sure he really wants to?"

"I am. He was majoring in business administration on that account. But your question's a very natural one, which is also bound to occur to the courts. If Bayard isn't here at the trial, it won't seem as if he has much interest that needs protection. Also, he's the main witness to prove the, the mental cruelty wasn't mine. At least, not entirely mine—I think." Cardynge gestured savagely with his cigaret. "All right, I married a girl young enough to be my daughter. We look at life differently. But I tried to please her."

Yamamura liked him for the admission.

"I've no proof about the lovers," Cardynge said, "except what she told me herself in our last fight. And, well, indications. You know. Never mind, I won't ask anyone to poke into that. Lisette was nearly always charming in company. And I'm not given to weeping on my friends' shoulders. So, as I say, we need Bayard's testimony. If there's to be any kind of justice done. In fact, if we can get him back before the trial, I'm sure she'll pull in her horns. The whole wretched business can be settled quietly, no headlines, no—you understand?"

"I believe so." Yamamura considered him a while before asking gently, "You're still in love

with her, aren't you?"

Cardynge reddened. Yamamura wondered if he was going to get up and walk out. But he slumped and said, "If so, I'll get over it. Will you take the case?"

The rest of the discussion was strictly ways and means.

Rain pursued Yamamura to the porch of the house. Right and left and behind was only blackness, the neighborhood slept. But here light spilled from the front windows, made his dripping coat shimmer and glistened on the spears that slanted past the rail. The wind howled too loudly for him to hear the doorbell.

But the man inside ought to—

Yamamura grew aware that he had stood ringing for well over a minute. Perhaps the bell was out of order. He seized the knocker and slammed it down hard, again and again. Nothing replied but the storm.

Damnation! He tried the knob. The door opened. He stepped through and closed it behind him. "Hello," he called. "Are you here, Mr. Cardynge?"

The whoop outside felt suddenly less violent than it was—distant, unreal, like that voice over the wire. The house brimmed with silence.

It was a big, old-fashined house; the entry hall where he stood was only dully lit from the archway to the living room. Yamamura called once more and desisted. The sound was too quickly lost. *Maybe he went out. I'll wait.* He hung coat and hat on the rack and passed on in.

The room beyond, illuminated by a ceiling and a floor lamp, was large and low, well furnished but with the comfortable slight shabbiness of a long-established home. At the far end was a couch with a coffee table in front.

Cardynge lay there.

Yamamura plunged toward him. "Hey!" he shouted, and got no response. Cardynge was sprawled full length, neck resting across the arm of the couch. Though his eyes were closed, the jaw had dropped open and the face was without color. Yamamura shook him a little. The right leg flopped off the edge; its shoe hit the carpet with a thud that had no resonance.

Judas priest! Yamamura grabbed a horribly limp wrist. The flesh did not feel cold, but it yielded too much to pressure. He couldn't find any pulse.

His watch crystal was wet. On the table stood a nearly empty fifth of bourbon, a glass with some remnants of drink, and a large pill bottle. Yamamura reached out, snatched his fingers back—possible evidence there—and brought Cardynge's left arm

to the mouth. That watch didn't fog over.

His first thought was of artificial respiration. Breath and heart could not have stopped very long ago. He noticed the dryness of the tongue, the uncleanliness elsewhere. *Long enough,* he thought, and rose.

The storm hurled itself against silence and fell back. In Yamamura's mind everything was overridden by the marble clock that ticked on the mantel; the last meaningful sound in the world. He had rarely felt so alone.

What had Cardynge said, in his call?

Yamamura started across the room to the telephone, but checked himself. Could be fingerprints. The police would soon arrive anyway, and there was no use in summoning a rescue squad which might be needed another place.

He returned to the body and stood looking down. Poor Cardynge. He hadn't appeared a suicidal type; but how much does any human know of any other? The body was more carefully dressed, in suit and clean shirt and tie, than one might have expected from a man baching it. Still, the room was neat too. Little more disturbed its orderliness than a couple of butts and matches in an ashtray on the end table next the couch. No day servant could maintain such conditions by herself.

Wait a bit. A crumpled sheet of paper, on the floor between couch and coffee table. Yamamura stooped, hesitated, and picked it up. Even dead, his client had a claim on him.

He smoothed it out with care. It had originally been folded to fit an envelope. A letter, in a woman's handwriting, dated yesterday.

My dear Aaron—

—for you were very dear to me once, and in a way you still are. Not least, I suppose, because you have asked me to return to you, after all the heartbreak and bitterness. And yes, I believe you when you swear you will try to make everything different between us this time. Will you, then, believe me when I tell you how long and agonizingly hard I have thought since we spoke of this? How it hurts me so much to refuse you that I can't talk of it, even over the phone, but have to write this instead?

But if I came back it would be the same hideous thing over again. Your temper, your inflexibility, your suspicion. Your son returning, as he will, and your inability to see how insanely he hates me for taking his mother's place, how he

will work and work until he succeeds in poisoning your mind about me. And I'm no saint myself. I admit that. My habits, my outlook, my demands—am I cruel to say that you are too old for them?

No, we would only hurt each other there worse. I don't want that, you or for myself. So I can't come back.

I'm going away for a while, I don't know where, or if I did know I wouldn't tell you, because you might not stop pleading with me and that would be too hard to bear. I don't want to see you again. Not for a long time, at least, till our wounds have scarred. I'll get an attorney to settle the business part with you. I wish you everything good. Won't you wish the same for me? Goodbye, Aaron.

Lisette

Yamamura stared into emptiness. *I wonder what she'll think when she learns what this letter drove him to do.*

She may even have counted on it.

He put the sheet back approximately as he had found it, and unconsciously wiped his fingers on his trousers. In his need to keep busy, he squatted to examine the evidence on the table. His nose was keen, he could detect a slight acridness in the smell about the glass. The bottle from the drugstore held sleeping pills prescribed for Cardynge. It was half empty. Barbiturates and alcohol can be a lethal combination.

And yet—Yamamura got to his feet. He was not unacquainted with death, he had looked through a number of its many doors and the teachings of the Buddha made it less terrible to him than to most. But something was wrong here. The sense of that crawled along his nerves.

Perhaps only the dregs of the nightmare from which Cardynge had roused him.

Yamamura wanted his pipe in the worst way. But better not smoke before the police had seen what was here . . . as a matter of form, if nothing else. Form was something to guard with great care, on this night when chaos ran loose beyond the walls and the world stood unmeasurably askew within them.

He began to prowl. A wastepaper basket stood near the couch. Struck by a thought—his logical mind functioned swiftly and unceasingly, as if to weave a web over that which lay below—he crouched and looked in. Only two items. The housekeeper must have emptied the basket today, and Cardynge tossed these in after he got back from his office. He wouldn't have observed the holiday; few estab

lishments did, and he would have feared leisure. Yamamura fished them out.

One was a cash register receipt from a local liquor store, dated today. The amount shown corresponded to the price of a fifth such as stood on the table. Lord, but Cardynge must have been drunk, half out of his skull, when he prepared that last draught for himself!

The other piece was an envelope, torn open by hand, addressed here and postmarked yesterday evening in Berkeley. So he'd have found it in his mail when he came home this afternoon. In the handwriting of the letter, at the upper left corner, stood *Lisette Cardynge* and the apartment address her husband had given Yamamura.

The detective dropped them back into the basket and rose with a rather forced shrug. So what? If anything, this clinched the matter. One need merely feel compassion now, an obligation to find young Bayard—no, not even that, since the authorities would undertake it—so, no more than a wish to forget the whole business. There was enough harm and sorrow in the world without brooding on the unamendable affairs of a near stranger.

Only . . . Cardynge had wakened him, helplessly crying for help. And the wrongness would not go away.

Yamamura swore at himself. What was it that looked so impossible here? Cardynge's telephoning? He'd spoken strangely, even—or especially—for a man at the point of self-murder. *Though he may have been delirious. And certainly I was half asleep, in a morbid state, myself. I could have mixed his words with my dreams, and now be remembering things he never said.*

The suicide, when Cardynge read Lisette's ultimate refusal? Or the refusal itself? Was it in character for her? Yamamura's mind twisted away from the room, two days backward in time.

He was faintly relieved when she came to his office. Not that the rights or wrongs of the case had much to do with the straight-forward task of tracing Bayard and explaining why he should return. But Yamamura always preferred to hear both sides of a story.

He stood up as she entered. Sunlight struck through the window, a hurried shaft between clouds, and blazed on her blonde hair. She was tall and slim, with long green eyes in a singularly lovely face, and she walked like a cat. "How do you do?" he said. Her hand lingered briefly in his before they sat down, but the gesture looked natural. He offered her a cigaret from a box he

kept for visitors. She declined.

"What can I do for you, Mrs. Cardynge?" he asked, with a little less than his normal coolness.

"I don't know," she said unhappily. "I've no right to bother you like this."

"You certainly do, since your husband engaged me. I suppose he is the one who told you?"

"Yes. We saw each other yesterday, and he said he'd started you looking for his son. Do you think you'll find him?"

"I have no doubts. The man I sent to Seattle called in this very morning. He'd tracked down some of Bayard's associates there, who told him the boy had gone to Chicago. No known address, but probably as simple a thing as an ad in the paper will fetch him. It's not as if he were trying to hide."

She stared out the window before she swung those luminous eyes back and said, "How can I get you to call off the search?"

Yamamura chose his words with care. "I'm afraid you can't. I've accepted a retainer."

"I could make that up to you."

Yamamura bridled. "Ethics forbid."

One small hand rose to her lips. "Oh. I'm so sorry. Please don't think I'm offering a bribe. But—" She blinked hard, squared her shoulders, and faced him head on. "Isn't there such a thing as a higher ethic?"

"Well-ll . . . what do you mean, Mrs. Cardynge?"

"I suppose Aaron praised Bayard at great length. And quite honestly, too, from his own viewpoint. His only son, born of his first wife, who must have been a dear person. How *could* Aaron see how evil he is?"

Yamamura made a production of charging his pipe. "I hear there was friction between you and the boy," he said.

A tired little smile tugged at her mouth. "You put it mildly. And of course I'm prejudiced. After all, he wrecked my marriage. Perhaps 'evil' is too strong a word. Nasty? And that may apply to nothing but his behavior toward me. Which in turn was partly resentment at my taking his mother's place, and partly—" Lisette stopped.

"Go on," said Yamamura low.

Color mounted in her cheeks. "If you insist. I think he was in love with me. Not daring to admit it to himself, he did everything he could to get me out of his life. And out of his father's. He was more subtle than a young man ought to be, though. Insinuations; provocations; disagreements carefully nursed into quarrels—" She gripped the chair arms. "Our marriage, Aaron's and mine, would never have been a simple

one to make work. The difference in age, outlook, everything. I'm not perfect either, not easy to live with. But I was trying. Then Bayard made the job impossible for both of us."

"He left months ago," Yamamura pointed out.

"By that time the harm was done, even if he didn't realize it himself."

"Does it matter to you any more what he does?"

"Yes. I—Aaron wants me to come back." She looked quickly up. "No doubt he's told you otherwise. He has a Victorian sense of privacy. The sort of man who maintains appearances, never comes out of his shell, until at last the pressure inside gets too great and destroys him. But he's told me several times since I felt that I can come back any time I want."

"And you're thinking of doing so?"

"Yes. Though I can't really decide. It would be hard on us both, at best, and nearly unbearable if we fail again. But I do know that Bayard's presence would make the thing absolutely impossible." She clasped her purse with a desperate tightness. "And even if I decide not to try, if I get a divorce, the lies Bayard would tell—Please, Mr. Yamamura! Don't make a bad matter worse!"

The detective struck match to tobacco and did not speak until he had the pipe going. "I'm sorry," he said. "But I can't decree that a father should not get in touch with his son. Even if I did resign from the case, he can hire someone else. And whatever happens, Bayard won't stay away forever. Sooner or later you'll have to face this problem. Won't you?"

The bright head bent. "I'm sorry," Yamamura said again.

She shook herself and jumped to her feet. "That's all right," she whispered. "I see your point. Of course. Don't worry about me. I'll manage. Thanks for your trouble." He could scarcely rise before she was gone.

The doorbell jarred Yamamura to awareness. As he opened for the patrolman, the storm screamed at him. "Hi, Charlie," he said in a mutter. "You didn't have a useless trip. Wish to hell you had."

Officer Moffat hung up his slicker. "Suicide?"

"Looks that way. Though—Well, come see for yourself."

Moffat spoke little before he had examined what was in the living room. Then he said, "Joe told me this was a client of yours, and he called you tonight. What'd he want?"

"I don't know." Yamamura felt free, now, to console himself with his pipe. "His words were

so incoherent, and I was so fogged with sleep myself, that I can't remember very well. Frankly, I'm just as glad."

"That figures for a suicide. Also the Dear John letter. What makes you so doubtful?"

Yamamura bit hard on his pipestem. The bowl became a tiny campfire over which to huddle. "I can't say. You know how it is when you're having a dream, and something is gruesomely wrong but you can't find out what, only feel that it is? That's what this is like."

He paused. "Of course," he said, seeking rationality, "Cardynge and his wife told me stories which were somewhat inconsistent. She claimed to me he wanted her back; he denied it. But you know how big a liar anyone can become when his or her most personal affairs are touched on. Even if he spoke truth at the time, he could have changed his mind yesterday. In either case, he'd have gotten drunk when she refused in this note, and if it turned out to be an unhappy drunk he could have hit the absolute bottom of depression and killed himself."

"Well," Moffat said, I'll send for the squad." He laid a handkerchief over the phone and put it to his ear. "Damn! Line must be down somewhere. I'll have to use the car radio."

Yamamura remained behind while the policeman grumbled his way back into the rain. His eyes rested on Cardynge's face. It was so recently dead that a trace of expression lingered, but nothing he could read. As if Cardynge were trying to tell him something . . . The thought came to Yamamura that this house was now more alive than its master, for it could still speak.

Impulsively, he went through the inner door and snapped on the light. Dining room, with a stiff, unused look; yes, the lonely man doubtless ate in the kitchen. Yamamura continued thither.

That was a fair-sized place, in cheerful colors which now added to desolution. It was as neat as everything else. One plate, silverware, and coffee apparatus stood in the drainrack. They were dry, but a dishtowel hung slightly damp. Hm . . . Cardynge must have washed his things quite shortly before he mixed that dose. Something to do with his hands, no doubt, a last effort to fend off the misery that came flooding over him. Yamamura opened the garbage pail, saw a well-gnawed T-bone and the wrappers from packages of frozen peas and French fries. Proof, if any were needed, that Cardynge had eaten here, doubtless been here the whole time. The refrigerator held a good bit of food; one ice tray was partly empty. Yamamura went on to

the bathroom and bedrooms without noticing anything special.

Moffat came back in as the other man regained the living room. "They're on their way," he said. "I'll stick around here. You might as well go on home, Trig."

"I suppose so." Yamamura hesitated. "Who'll notify his wife?"

Moffat regarded him closely. "You've met her, you said, and know something about the case. Think you'd be able to break the news gently?"

"I don't know. Probably not. Anyhow, looks as if I'll have to tell his son, when we find him."

Moffat tilted back his cap and rubbed his head. "Son left town? We'll have to interview him ourselves. To tie up loose ends, make sure he really was away and so forth. Not that—Huh?"

Yamamura picked his pipe off the floor.

"What's the matter, Trig?"

"Nothing." The detective wheeled about, stared at the body on the couch and then out the window into night.

"Uh, one thing," Moffat said. "Since you do know a little about her. Think we should notify Mrs. Cardynge at once, or let her sleep till morning?"

It yelled within Yamamura.

"I mean, you know, theoretically we should send someone right off," Moffat said, "but even if she has left him, this is going to be a blow. Especially since she's indirectly respon——"

Yamamura snatched Moffat's arm. "Yes!" he cried. "Right away! Can you get a man there this instant?"

"What?"

"To arrest her!"

"Trig, are you crazy as that stiff was?"

"We may already be too late. Get back to your radio!"

Moffat wet his lips. "What do you mean?"

"The purse. Hers. The evidence will be there, if she hasn't had time to get rid of it—By God, if you don't, I'll make a citizen's arrest myself!"

Moffat looked into the dilated eyes a full second before he pulled himself loose. "Okay, Trig. What's her address again?" Yamamura told him and he ran off without stopping to put on his coat.

Yamamura waited, pipe smoldering in his hand. A dark peace rose within him. The wrongness had departed. There was nothing here worse than a dead man and a night gone wild.

Moffat re-entered, drenched and shivering. "I had to give them my word I had strong presumptive evidence," he said. "Well, I know what you've done in the past. But this better be good."

"Good enough, if we aren't too late," Yamamura said.

He pointed to the ashtray. "Cardynge was pretty nervous when he talked to me," he went on. "He hated to bare his soul. So he smoked one cigaret after another. But here—two butts for an entire evening. If you look in the kitchen, you'll find that he made a hearty meal. And washed up afterward. Does any of this square with a man utterly shattered by a Dear John letter?

"The dishes are dry in the rack. But something was washed more recently. The towel is still moist, even though the saliva has dried in the corpse's mouth. What was washed? And by whom?"

Moffat grew rigid. "You mean that letter's a plant? But the envelope——"

"Something else was in that envelope. 'Dear Aaron, can I come see you tonight on a very private matter? Lisette.' She came with a pretext for discussion that could not have been particularly disturbing to him. Nor could her presence have been; his mind was made up about her. But they had a few drinks together.

"At some point she went to the bathroom, taking her glass along, and loaded it with powder poured from the capsules. Then, I'd guess, while he went, she switched glasses with him. She'd know he used sleeping pills. Convenient for her. Still, if he had not, she could have gotten some other poison without too much trouble or danger.

"Of course, she couldn't be sure the dose would prove fatal, especially since I doubt if they drank much. Maybe she patted his head, soothed him, so he drifted into unconsciousness without noticing. He'd take a while, possibly an hour or two, to die. She must have waited, meanwhile arranging things. Washed both glasses that had her prints on them, fixed the one on the table here and clasped his hand around it for prints, poured most of the whiskey down the sink.

"If he'd started coming around, she could have returned the pill bottle to the bathroom and told him he'd had a fainting spell or whatever. She could even say she'd tried to get a doctor, but none could or would come. He wouldn't be suspicious. As things turned out, though, he died and she left. The only thing she overlooked was the evidence of the food and cigarets."

Moffat tugged his chin. "The autopsy will show how much he did or did not drink," he said. "Did that occur to her?"

"Probably. But it's no solid proof. He didn't *have* to be on a tear when he decided to end his life. The missing booze could've been spilled accidentally. But it

would help plant the idea of suicide in people's minds. She's clever. Ruthless. And one hell of a fine actress."

"Motive?"

"Money. If Bayard testified against her in the divorce proceedings, she'd get nothing but the usual settlement. But as a widow, she'd inherit a mighty prosperous business. She married him in the first place for what she could get out of him, of course."

Moffat clicked his tongue. "I'd hoped for better than this from you, Trig" he said with a note of worry. "You're really reaching."

"I know. This is more hunch than anything else. There won't even be legal grounds for an indictment, if she's disposed of the proof."

"Do you suppose she was mistaken about his being dead, and after she left he roused himself long enough to call you? That sounds unlikeliest of all."

"No argument," said Yamamura grimly. "That call's the one thing I can't explain."

They fell silent, amidst the rain and wind and relentless clock-tick, until the homicide squad arrived. The first officer who came in the door looked pleased, in a bleak fashion. "We got the word on our way here," said. "She wasn't home, so the patrolman waited. She arrived a few minutes afterward."

"Must have left this house—" Yamamura looked at his watch. 2:27. Had the whole thing taken so short a while? "About an hour ago, seeing I was phoned then. Even in this weather, that's slow driving."

"Why, no. She said twenty minutes or thereabouts."

"What? You're sure? How do you know?"

"Oh, she broke down and confessed all over the place, as soon as Hansen asked where she'd been and looked in her purse."

Yamamura let out his breath in a long, shaken sigh.

"What was there", Moffat asked.

"The original note, which asked for this meeting and furnished an envelope to authenticate the fake one," Yamamura said. "I was hoping she'd taken it back with her, to destroy more thoroughly than she might have felt safe in doing here." More sadness than victory was in his tone: "I admit I'm surprised she spilled her guts so fast. But it must have affected her more than she'd anticipated, to sit and watch her husband die, with nothing but that clock speaking to her."

The discrepancy hit him anew. He turned to the homicide officer and protested: "She can't have left here only twenty minutes ago. That's barely before

my arrival. Cardynge woke me almost half an hour before that!"

"While she was still here—?" Moffat contemplated Yamamura for a time that grew long. "Well," he said at length, "maybe she'd gone to the can." He took the phone. "We just might be able to check that call, if we hurry."

"The line's dead," Yamamura reminded him.

"No, I get a dial tone now," Moffat said. "They must've repaired it a few minutes ago. Hello, operator——"

Yamamura became occupied with explaining his presence and showing the squad around. When they came back to the living room, Moffat had cradled the phone. He stood so unmoving that their own feet halted.

"What's the matter, Charlie?" the inspector asked. "You look like the devil. Couldn't you find out anything?"

"No." Moffat shook his head, slowly, as if it weighed too much. "There wasn't any call."

"What?" Yamamura exclaimed.

"You heard me," Moffat said. "This line went down about midnight. Wasn't fixed till now." He took a step forward. "Okay, Trig. What really brought you here?"

"A phone call, I tell you." Yamamura's back ached with a tension he cold not will away. "From Cardynge."

"And I tell you that's impossible."

Yamamura stood a while hearing the clock tick. Finally, flatly, he said: "All right. Maybe there never was a call. I was half asleep, half awake, my brain churning. I guess that subconsciously I was worried about Cardynge, and so I dreamed the message, even took the phone off the rack, it felt so real."

"Well . . . yes." Moffat began to relax. "That must be what happened. Funny coincidence, though."

"It better be a coincidence," Yamamura said.

The men looked simultaneously at the body, and at the phone, and away.

LICENSES FOR CATS

Deputy Police Chief Thomas Rasmusen of Washington, D.C., as we went to press, was investigating—at the request of the District Commissioners—the problem of whether cats should be licensed like dogs. "I don't think they should", he was quoted as saying. "Cats just don't make that much trouble. They don't bite anybody. They roam at night. And they don't carry rabies."

We have no word on the reaction to this of those who presumably feel cats are contributing to Washington's crime statistics.

caliber: thirty-two

by A. F. Williams

"Pull that Caddie over to the curb", said McGarr, suddenly alert.

The lights of the big headquarters limousine poked nosily into the rear window of the car ahead. Casey turned from the wheel and protested.

"Aw, Lieutenant, so she *is* driving like a woman. The fight's on TV in half an hour."

"Pull her over! That guy in the back seat looks like he has a hole in the head."

It was full dark and they were just sweeping down into the arcade of the Drive where the black water of the East River shows through the arches, reflecting the gentle lights of nearby Welfare Island. Above in silent elegance sat the black brick buildings of the wealthy.

At the growl of Casey's siren the green Cadillac sedan jammed to a stop in the middle of the road. Casey swore earnestly, swinging the limousine to the curb. The girl was out of the green sedan, running toward them, black hair streaming dramatically behind her. Quite a dish, thought McGarr, if you

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The author, a Special Agent for "twelve crammed years" with the FBI, is at present a Special Agent of the Arson, Theft and Fraud Department, National Board of Fire Underwriters. A contributor to EQMM *and to* Black Mask, *one of his stories won first prize in a short story contest run by the* FBI Investigator, *but that, as he points out, is not a periodical sold to the public. . . .*

like them in pastel mink, and pearls that were the very own work of wild oysters. In the brash glare of headlights her skin seemed very white and there was a good deal of it showing through the open design of the evening gown. Her wide eyes were a frightened blue and she would have been beautiful except for the taut lines of strain in her face.

"Officer", she began, "I didn't realize. . ."

McGarr waved it away.

"Looked in the back seat lately. Miss?"

"What do you mean? I thought it was my driving. . ."

He piloted her back to the Cadillac, opened the rear door, watching her all the while. She stared into the car for what seemed a long time.

"Johnny", she breathed at last. *"Johnny!"* she screamed.

Casey caught her as she sagged against the car. McGarr had his nose inside the Cadillac, his square butt poked out into the traffic. Johnny was crammed into the far corner of the seat. In his left temple was a punctured hole surrounded by a patch of blue skin. In his left hand was a .32 automatic.

Johnny was handsome and big for his age.The knot in his necktie was big as a fist. The shirt, in subdued purple, had collar points ending near the deltoids. And Johnny was as dead as he was ever going to get.

When the girl had come around, and the crowd that flocked in with the ambulance had been dispersed, McGarr asked her name.

"Alicia Prentiss", she whispered.

"Know this guy, Miss Prentiss?"

"Yes." Still a whisper. "We were going to be married."

"You were going to marry Johnny Bananas?"

"That's not—that was not his name."

"That's what they called him on the Miami-New York circuit."

"His name was Johnny Bolivar."

"They called him that too."

"They called him a lot of things", McGarr told me the next morning, over knishes and coffee at Ma Salwen's. "I don't figure what gets into our fancier coosies these days. Four million bucks she's got and she flops for a joker like Johnny. 'Mrs. Bananas, nee Alicia Prentiss' . . ."

"Last year", I said, "a gang of artists down at the Waldorf voted her the gal with the most beautiful eyes in America."

"They're not bad," agreed McGarr chomping on a hot potato knish.

"Not bad at all," mooned

Casey over his malted.

"And last week", I went on cheerfully, "one John Irving Bolivar insured himself for four hundred thousand dollars. Beneficiary: Miss Alicia Prentiss. The same."

Suddenly it was very silent in Ma Salwen's. Even Detective-Sergeant Bechtel at the far end of the counter stopped chewing, his fine yellow teeth halfway through a bagel.

"Let's hear about it", said McGarr at last.

"I investigated the application. After all I dug up on Johnny Bolivar they still issued the policy. I wouldn't know of course, but I heard the Prentiss name had something to do with their forgetting their scruples about insurable interest."

"They insured Johnny Bananas for four hundred grand?" McGarr was incredulous."

"At a top-rated premium. Because of occupation. Then the contract was farmed out to eight more companies on a re-insurance setup."

companies think they can get out from under by claiming

"So that accounts for your dropping in. Now I guess your suicide.'

I shrugged. "The suicide was within two years from the date of the policy, so the companies are liable only for a return of the premiums paid."

"Suicide. You see this as a suicide."

"He's got a thirty-two in his hand when you find him, powder specks in his head, and your doc says the hole was made by a thirty-two caliber or smaller. What do the books call that?"

"Sure", McGarr said mildly.

I paid the bill for the four of us and we went out into the excellent Spring sunshine of Foley Square. McGarr picked his teeth thoughtfully and watched a trio of fillies angling across the park toward the Federal Building.

"Spring's nice", he mused, his square red face glowing under the white waves of hair, his cold blue eyes momentarily soft.

"Do you think it could be anything *but* suicide?" I asked anxiously.

"What I like about Spring is that they take off those thick coats", McGarr said. "Got a cigar?"

Bechtel produced a cigar. Casey struck a match.

"You guys must be looking for promotions." To me he said, "It was no suicide. It was murder."

"Oh."

I wanted to shout about the gun in Bolivar's hand, the powder-stained skin. All I could get out was, "Oh."

"Ask me", McGarr said savagely, "did someone plant the

gun in his hand? No. Did they plot to make it look like a suicide, like they do in the movies? No. just the same it was *not* suicide, and your people are going to pay that insurance claim."

"What makes you so sure?"

"I knew Johnny Bananas. Johnny'd commit suicide over a girl like you'd kill your grandma for a lollypop."

"Who said he killed himself over a girl?"

"Didn't I tell you?" McGarr was the picture of innocence. "The Prentiss girl had a brawl with Bolivar at a Riverdale house party last night, about an hour after their engagement was announced. She told him to go chase himself up a banyan tree."

"What'd they fight about?"

"I don't know. Yet. Last night she flipped after she got out that much and her doc wouldn't let us talk to her any more."

"What now?"

"I told the lab men to wrap that Caddie in cellophane and give it everything they've got. Now I got to find out what happened at that party. I got to know who was there and how well they knew Johnny. But first I got to have a little talk with that girl."

"Okay if I ride along?"

McGarr grunted. "You might be some help."

Going uptown, McGarr let Casey have his fun with the siren until we swung up from the river and started picking our way among the houses near Sutton Place. Then he said, sourly, "Shut that damn thing off. We're not on a waterfront raid."

Alicia Prentiss received us in a high-ceilinged room with a river wall of big glass panes extending from floor to ceiling in a dramatic bay window. You could see the boats on the river and the Queensboro Bridge and the smoky flat island beyond. Very nice.

McGarr introduced Bechtel and me. "Mr. Shearer represents the Clyde Mutual Insurance Company."

"Ah." The lovely lady looked in my direction but she didn't seem to see me. Her blue eyes were startling against a background of creamy skin and jet-black hair.

"Okay, Miss Prentiss?" I asked.

"Of course. I see no objection to Mr. Shearer's presence. Sooner or later we shall have to talk about the insurance."

McGarr said, "What I'd like to know, Miss Prentiss, is what happened at that party in Riverdale last night."

"But I told you about that . . ."

"You weren't in such good shape, Miss Prentiss. You tell me about it in your own way now."

She began without hesitation, as though she had given it a lot of thought and now had every-

thing clear in her mind.

"Sebastian Gaunt gave the party. He's the art dealer. It wasn't to be anything special, just dinner and cocktails, and later some of us were going to a dance at the club. Then Johnny —" her voice faltered "—Johnny said it would be a wonderful time to announce our engagement. I wanted to wait a few days but he seemed so excited about it that I agreed."

"Who was there?"

"Six of us. Sebastian. Mady Stearns. My brother Toby and a girl he brought. Johnny and I."

"They all knew you were going to marry Johnny Bolivar?"

"Only Sebastian knew. I hadn't even had a chance to tell Toby. He was away to Atlantic City last week."

"Whose idea was that life insurance?"

She flushed. "It was Johnny's idea. He was so terribly afraid I might think he was a fortune hunter. As though such a thing could ever enter my mind about Johnny . . ."

"What'd the insurance prove?"

"I told him it didn't make sense." She shrugged helplessly. "But it proved something to Johnny, I guess, because he was very stubborn about it. In the end I gave in. I even—well, I even advanced him the money for the premium, temporarily."

McGarr was silent a moment.

"Miss Prentiss, do you think you could tell us now about that little argument you had with Johnny?"

The flush deepened.

"I'm sorry about last night, Lieutenant. Only I couldn't talk about Johnny then without feeling I'd killed him. It's better today. The little argument, as you call it, was all my fault. I had gone upstairs to dress for the dance and when I came down there was nobody in sight but Sebastian. He suggested a stroll. Down by the tennis courts we came on Johnny and Mady Stearns together and I just lost my head. You know about Mady?" she said anxiously.

McGarr nodded.

Alicia Prentiss said, "She used to be Johnny's—she used to go with Johnny." McGarr nodded again.

"She had her arms around his neck and was trying to kiss him. I didn't think he was resisting very hard. I heard her telling him he was marrying me on the rebound, just because they'd had a silly old argument. She said she'd never give him up. Then I walked in."

"Was Gaunt still with you?"

"Yes, he saw it all. I told Johnny our engagement was off. I—well, I threw the ring at him. I suppose I sounded very final, very Mauve Decade, but that's how it was."

"That was all. No more fireworks."

I thought she might be going to cry.

"Maybe it would have been better if I had made a big scene. Maybe I wouldn't have run away, and maybe Johnny wouldn't . . ."

She *was* going to cry.

McGarr made a fast diversionary tactic.

"Your brother Toby, Miss Prentiss, where does he live?"

She stared at him through damp and lovely eyes. "Why, here. Here with me."

"You two all there is of the family?"

"Yes."

"He handle the estate?"

She answered very carefully and took a wary while about it.

"We have separate estates. Toby has his own business in Wall Street. He advises me when I need his advice, but his own affairs take up most of his time."

"Where's Toby today?"

"I really don't know. I haven't seen him since I left the party."

"You saw him before you left?"

She looked honestly distressed. "There's something curious about that, Lieutenant. I left—well, to tell the strict truth—I ran away from the tennis court. Sebastian caught up with me at the house. It took me awhile to get away from him, and finally I had to tell him I wanted to be alone. He got my things and I went down to the car and drove away. I almost had an accident coming into the highway. The other car belonged to the girl who came with Toby and it looked like Toby in the car with her. At least whoever it was wore a topcoat like Toby's. I remember wondering why he would wear a topcoat in such warm weather. He had left it on the front seat of my car. It was gone."

"But you're not sure it was Toby?"

"I'm not sure. But it was Toby's girl and Toby's coat. I called out to them, to tell him I couldn't drive him back home unless he was leaving right away. I thought he looked back at me, but he didn't answer and they didn't stop."

"You were driving the Cadillac?"

"Yes. Oh God! I'll sell it! I'll burn it! I'll never drive it again!"

"This Sebastian Gaunt. You were going to marry him last winter."

She pulled up short, abruptly becoming once more The Alicia P.

"You seem to know a good deal, Lieutenant, about my affairs and those of my friends."

"Police business", McGarr said mildly, and waited for her to rush into print. He could have waited until the judgment. "All

right, Miss Prentiss, let's clear up a point. When Gaunt caught up with you at the house, he wasn't offering any consolation. What he told you was to chuck this racetrack bum and give him, Gaunt, another chance. Correct?"

Her face registered shock. After a full half-minute she whispered, "Yes, yes, he did. Almost in those very words."

McGarr got up, unobtrusively tucked his hard belly beneath his belt and said, "You don't doubt for a minute that Johnny Bolivar killed himself over you."

He could have hit her with a jai-alai bat.

When she got back her voice it carried a lot of acid.

"You might have spared me that, Lieutenant."

McGarr said harshly, "Get a good night's sleep, lady. Johnny Bolivar never killed himself over you or anybody else. Johnny Bolivar was murdered."

Across her pale and lovely face slipped a fugitive expression. Of relief. Or disbelief. Or of fear. You seldom can tell. McGarr watched her closely.

"Murdered", she said at last. "Murdered." With no exclamation points.

McGarr got nowhere after that.

Bechtel said, "Lieutenant, you didn't ask her was the body in the car when she left Riverdale. You didn't ask her that, Lieutenant." Casey pushed the big limousine along the river drive.

"No", said McGarr, "and I didn't ask her if she shot him or if she heard someone else shoot him on the way downtown."

"But gee, Loo . . ."

"Didn't you see the girl's almost blind! She shouldn't be allowed to drive. She must steer that car by instinct. She's vain, and she won't wear glasses, but it took her a good minute to recognize her own boy friend in the car last night. Just awhile ago she looked clean through Shearer because he was all of twelve feet away. And she isn't even sure it was her brother she rammed, almost, when she left Gaunt's party. Sure, she won a prize from those artists but they weren't giving it to her for twenty-twenty vision. Hell, it's like that lots of time. The worse her sight gets the nicer those big blue eyes are going to look. Why ask her about seeing a body in the car? If she put it there, she's not going to tell me, and if she didn't I'll take her word for it that she just didn't see it when she got into the driver's seat."

Casey said, "Gawd!" Imagine driving all that way with a stiff in the back seat and not knowing it!"

"Save the dramatics", growled MsGarr, "and get us up to Riverdale."

Sebastian Gaunt lived in a splendid old house north of Inwood. His front lawn sloped gently down to the gentle river. Gaunt's servant escorted us over the slope to where Mr. Gaunt reclined, beneath a fat and ancient oak, in one of those modern garden lounges that put your feet a yard higher than your head. Hygienic. Has something to do with pouring the blood back into your brain.

"Good afternoon gentlemen", he drawled. "Police, I presume. Don't mind if I stay where I am. Part of my regimen."

"Don't break it for me, McGarr said grimly. "I can talk to you if you're standing on your head." For my money Gaunt seemed to be doing just that, but it didn't faze McGarr. His approach was direct, and lacking in those little niceties which go to make up a successful interview with an art dealer.

"You used to be Miss Prentiss' boy friend."

"Well!" Gaunt's faun-like eyebrows leaped high on his forehead. The lean ascetic face reddened.

McGarr growled down at him, "Why'd you two break it off? Bolivar?"

"Really, officer, don't you think you should ask Miss Prentiss?"

"I'm asking you."

Slowly and deliberately Gaunt swung his long legs down from the high slope of the chair and sat up. A swift look of satisfaction went over McGarr's face.

Gaunt said slowly, "I don't know that I have to answer that sort of question."

There were fine mauve highlights in McGarr's ruddy cheeks. "You can answer me here, Gaunt, or you can call your lawyer and we'll all take a ride downtown. Free. On the city."

Gaunt looked that one over for a long moment, then said, through tight lips, "Miss Prentiss broke off our engagement. She seemed to feel there was no—mutuality of interests."

"But you couldn't see her marrying Bolivar."

"Should I have? A parasite? A cheap tout? Miss Prentiss would not have given him a second look had he not been her brother's friend."

"Toby Prentiss wanted the match?"

"You couldn't keep Toby Prentiss and Bolivar apart." Gaunt did not try to keep the spitefulness out of his voice. "Prentiss was taking bets for Bolivar. Friendly bets, that is, Lieutenant," he hurried on, "just in our own set. They had a good thing here."

"Yeah. What happened out at the tennis court yesterday?"

"So she told you about that" Gaunt murmured. He made a

resigned gesture with one hand. "Mady Stearns was with Bolivar, indulging in some quite useless hysterics. Miss Prentiss and I witnessed the scene and she thought it was necessary to tell Bolivar that it was all over between them, that he could have the creature if that was what he wanted."

"Or did Miss Prentiss say she'd kill him before she'd let him throw her over for Mady?"

Gaunt looked genuinely puzzled. "No. I don't know where you heard that, but it's not true."

"Who left first, Bolivar or the Prentiss girl?"

"I don't know where Bolivar went. I followed Miss Prentiss to the house. She was quite broken up and told me she would have to forego the dance. I went upstairs to get her things and the last I saw of her she was walking down the drive to her car."

"Was Bolivar in her car then?"

"I don't know. She wouldn't let me accompany her and the car was down the drive behind those trees." Gaunt pointed a finger, delicate as the wing-bone of a bird.

"Bechtel", ordered McGarr, "go down there and look for a bullet. Get a ladder out of the garage and go over the house. You don't mind, Mr. Gaunt?"

Mr. Gaunt didn't mind.

It took Bechtel and Casey two hours, while McGarr and Gaunt and I sat on the terrace overlooking the Hudson and talked about nothing. Gaunt bought us a drink but his heart wasn't in it, and his servant scowled as though he would have preferred to be serving arsenic.

"Here it is, Lieutenant", Bechtel crowed, bearing triumphantly in his hand what appeared to be a second-hand bullet. He came toiling up the slope, Casey breathing hard on his rear.

McGarr examined the object briefly, dropped it into his pocket.

"We needed some luck", he said. "Okay, Gaunt, thanks for everything."

The radio came to life as we were passing Grant's Tomb. There was an urgent message for McGarr. Miami Fats was in custody. Two witnesses had placed Miami Fats in Riverdale on the preceding afternoon, less than half a mile from Gaunt's estate.

"Who's Miami Fats?" I asked.

"Third strawboss in the Jersey mob", McGarr said, sunk in gloom. "And expeditor."

"Expeditor?"

"A new name for the guy who takes the contracts, the guy who hits the ones they want out of the way. What they want to know downtown is what Fats was doing in Riverdale yesterday, seeing as how he dropped

seven G's to Johnny Bananas in a Jersey dice game last week."

"Seven grand!"

"Yeah: It's not a big stake but with these boys it's the principle of the thing. Word got around that Johnny used a gimmick. I can't see Miami Fats falling for no gimmick."

Casey exploded.

"Jeez, Boss! The guy's in Riverdale the day Johnny gets the business!"

"What's it prove? Maybe he likes watching the boats from over here."

I didn't get to see Miami Fats just then. McGarr said he had a lot of things to talk to Fats about, things that had nothing to do with the death of Johnny Bananas. But later that afternoon he let me come with him to see Mady Stearns.

Mady was a handsome number who had caught the attention of a startled New York two years earlier by a very simple device. She went riding bareback in Central Park three Friday mornings in a row. She and the horse were both bareback, that is. Mady was wearing jodhpurs and sandals and nothing else but a ribbon in her hair, which didn't put her quite in Godiva's class but rated screamer headlnes with pix in the tabloids. Columnists and cops both caught the story on the same weekend. Mady went into the calaboose until Monday morning and, after her fine was paid, into the second lead of a Cory Patton musical.

Just now she was wearing more clothes than usual, a green hostess gown that hampered not a whit her sensational torso. She was distinctly untearful. She stood at the window and looked north over Central Park, scene of her first triumph. Her yard-long strawberry blonde hair gleamed expensively in the Spring sunshine.

"What can I feel at Johnny's dying?" she declaimed throatily. "He was already dead to me . . ."

McGarr chuckled. "Nice lines, Mady."

"That's right." She grinned. "I forgot you used to have the theatre beat, McGarr. They're some lousy blank verse from the third act of 'Never Say Die'. Funny thing, though, Lieutenant, they fit the scene even if they are corn. Believe it or not, I did all my crying over Johnny yesterday P.M. When I heard this morning somebody's killed him I couldn't feel a damn thing."

"Who told you about it?"

"The papers."

"The papers called it a suicide."

"And——"

"You said somebody killed him."

She studied the park intently, for maybe half a minute.

"McGarr, do you think Johnny

Bolivar killed himself?"

"What d'you think, Mady?"

"So I'm putting my neck out", she said, her eyes hard and calculating. "I was one guy who maybe had a good reason to kill him. But I'm saying it just the same: Johnny Bananas never committed suicide."

"How d'you know, Mady?"

She flung her arms dramatically wide. Resignation.

"How do I know? I know what Johnny *was*. Kill himself over that Park Avenue twist? All he was after was her dough!"

"Johnny needed money?"

"Johnny always needed money. Last week he took Miami Fats for seven grand and yesterday afternoon he was broke."

"He had enough cabbage handy to pay the premium on half a million life insurance . . ."

"Oh that!" Mady said scornfully. "The grand Miss Prentiss paid that. I'll bet the insurance was all her idea. Say . . ."

McGarr nodded. "I know what you're thinking, Mady. A lot of folks at yesterday's party had reasons for killing Johnny Bolivar."

"That goes for me too."

"That goes for you too." McGarr stood up. "What happened after the scrap at the tennis court?"

"Nothing. That sneak Gaunt brought La Prentiss and he took her away. Johnny blew his top for me getting him into a mess with Little Miss Moneybags. He said he was going down to make it up with her and he'd break my neck if I butted in again. So I just wandered around in the bushes and ate pieces off my heart."

"Um. Okay, Mady. Nice to see you again."

"Couple of ducats for the next show, Lieutenant?"

"Sure. I could always send them back if I have to arrest you."

"Ethics of the profession?"

She laughed and McGarr laughed. I didn't see what was so funny.

On the way downtown Casey asked. "Toby Prentiss next, Boss?"

McGarr shoved an Italian rope into the corner of his mouth.

"Sure, if you'll tell me where to find him."

"What d'you mean, Lieutenant?"

The back of Detective-Sergeant Bechtel's neck got very red. McGarr said, "Sergeant Bechtel looked for Mr. Prentiss all last night and couldn't find hide nor hair of him. Think you could do better, Casey?"

Bechtel protested, "Aw, Lieutenant."

"Nothing for you to feel bad about." McGarr blew a cloud of villainous smoke fit to choke the pigeons. "Maybe Toby Prentiss

doesn't know his pal is dead. Maybe he's shacking up with the girl friend over the weekend and not reading the papers. Right now, I'm more interested in Toby's girl friend. What do we know about her?"

"What do you know about her, Lieutenant?" Casey looked sly.

"Miami Fats says she's his girl. Goes by the name of Bee-Bo Vane at some dump out in Paterson where she sings and shakes on top of a horseshoe bar. The night Johnny took Fats in the crap game, Bee-Bo Vane disappears. Fats thinks she tagged along with Johnny. Fats thinks maybe Johnny palmed her off on Toby Prentiss, so that Alicia Prentiss wouldn't know she skipped with Johnny. That's why, Fats says, he was in Riverdale yesterday, looking up some lost property. Like I said before—with these gees it's the principle of the thing."

Casey whistled. "What a chance to sock that bum with a murder rap!"

"Sure, Casey", said McGarr with unwonted gentleness, "but we still got to prove it wasn't suicide. All the evidence so far says Johnny did it himself and evidence is all those twelve good people in the jurybox are supposed to believe. We can't go in and say Johnny Bolivar didn't kill himself just because he wasn't the type."

Next morning our more reckless tabloid had a fat front page:

GAMBLER SUSPECT
IN BOLIVAR KILL
SHOOTS SOCIALITE

Midtown Hotel Scene
Of Dawn Gun Battle

"All Because Of Little Me"
Says Bee-Bo

Miami Fats Castellane Pumps Four Into Toby Prentiss; Claims Self-Defense

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Less than twenty-four hours after his release on bail as a suspect in the killing of Johnny Bolivar, Peter Castellane, alias Miami Fats, forced his way into a room of the Hotel Marcy at dawn today and wounded Cafe Society's Toby Prentiss with four slugs from a .32 automatic.

Prentiss is the younger brother of Alicia Prentiss, the lovely who was slated to marry gambler Bolivar, before his mysterious death yesterday, now under police investigation.

Bee-Bo Vane, nightclub dancer and friend of Castellane, was unharmed.

Miami Fats, who for twenty years has been giving his occupation as commission broker on those rare occasions when he finds himself in the police line-up, allegedly entered the Marcy lobby early this morning, forced his way past a desk clerk, and compelled a frightened elevator operator to take him to the sixth floor.

There he kicked in the door of Room 602 and found his Bee-Bo with Toby.

Prentiss, police say, grabbed a gun from under the pillow, but, before he could unlimber it, was shot four times by Castellane. Miami Fats surrendered to police without a struggle. All he would say was, "I ain't admitting I shot him, but if I did it was in self-defense."

Prentiss refused to remain at the Park Memorial Hospital, where his condition was found to be not serious. He insisted on returning to the luxurious Sutton Place apartment which he shares with his sister.

Bee-Bo Vane, who thrushes in a Paterson, N.J., nite spot, told this reporter: "The fight was all on account of little me. Poor Toby shouldn't have gone for his rod. Poor Fats had to shoot in self-defense."

Poor Bee-Bo!

There was some more, mainly about Bee-Bo Vane, whose cheesecake photo took up half the front page.

I phoned McGarr. He chuckled. "Thought I'd hear from you about now. Come on down and watch me cost you insurance guys a half million."

"So you made it out murder——"

"What else?"

Bechtel, McGarr and a male steno were with Castellane in one of the big bare interview rooms. The Jersey mobster was a brief round man with unhealthy patches of soot under his dull black eyes. He wore a conservative business suit that gave him the air of a prosperous small-town banker.

"Who's this joker?" His voice was flat and husky and cold.

"Insurance", McGarr said amiably. "Nothing for you to worry about." To me he said, "Mr. Castellane has graciously decided to talk this matter over with us even before his lawyer gets here."

Mr. Castellane was unmarked, his suit unrumpled. I suspected McGarr's generosity in letting me sit in might have been moved by a desire to have a lay witness.

"My lawyer's a busy man" Fats explained.

"That's right", McGarr added. "He's an assistant county prosecutor over there. He has a lot of problems." Fats looked at him sharply. "But go ahead, Fats. You were saying . . ."

"Like I was saying, all I wanted was the broad. Maybe I'd 'a' roughed her up a little later on, but I didn't have anythin' against that Prentiss guy. That jerk didn't even know who she was when he took over from Johnny B., and I don't have to go lookin' for trouble, it comes to me. But before I could even tell the jerk to sit on his hands he pulls this rod. So I had to blow him over."

"They took three bullets out of him, Fats. But there were four bullet holes in his shoulder and neck . . ."

Miami shrugged his fleshy shoulders. "I tol' you before I o'ny shot him three times. Why would I kid about it? You got my gun, they's six left in the clip. Leaves three shots."

McGarr stood up, grinning. "Get that typed up", he told the steno, "and Mr. Castellane will sign it.' '

"When my lawyer gets here," Fats said stubbornly.

"When his lawyer gets here. Okay, Fats, you got any complaints about the meals here, let me know."

Fats had a charming smile, like the rictus of death.

"Come on", said McGarr, "we'll go make a pinch."

"You got it made, Boss?" Casey said excitedly, jockeying past three strolling Chinese in Mott Street.

"I got the lab report on the bloodstains from the back seat of Prentiss' Cadillac. Johnny Bolivar'd been killed with a thirty-two and there was a thirty-two in his hand. And sure, there were powder grains in his skin. But if it was suicide, then the guy had two different kinds of blood in his veins. Because the lab found some of those stains were Type O and some more were Type A. That gave me what I wanted. There'd been two people in that back seat, and both of them bleeding. And the chunk of lead Bechtel and Casey dug out of Gaunt's house had a spot of Type A blood on it. Just like Bolivar's."

"That doesn't prove it *was* Bolivar's."

"That's right, Professor. But it's good cor-rob-or-a-tive evidence. Just like it's good cor-rob-or-a-tive evidence that the one we're going to put away for this murder has Type O blood."

Casey reached the drive. He wasn't talking, which meant he was thinking. We were all doing our best.

"I liked the girl too", McGarr rumbled, half to himself. "Even if she had a burn for Johnny

Bananas, a heel, I liked her. Somebody said you got to be patient with the rich, so I took it easy on her and still she gives me a bum steer."

"How come?"

"She tells me she minds her own money and little Toby just gives her advice now and then. She lets me think Toby's got enough to do keeping his eye on his own millions. And what d'you think I flush when I start nosing into their bankrolls? Toby's flat as a day-old beer, renting himself a desk in Wall Street and trying to make like those guys Pearce, Fenner and so forth. About all he's got left is what she feeds him for managing *her* lettuce and it looks like he's been doing a little gardening on that."

"When did all this come out?" I asked.

"What d'you think I do nights, sleep? Even though I cotton to the girl I can't pass her up as a likely prospect. Not when she stands to come into four hundred thou if Johnny dies. Me and Batchtel spent last night with her and she finally got around to telling us why she didn't want us to know Toby was broke. Account of she figured we might think he killed Johnny."

"Why?"

"Toby couldn't pick ponies. He lost eight hundred grand to Bolivar in three years."

I whistled.

"Not so fast," McGarr growled. "Johnny Bananas made it all up to our Toby. Johnny was letting Toby get back that lettuce fast, taking bets from guys in Toby's society crowd. Guys like Gaunt, f'rinstance, who wouldn't eat caviar with a guy like Johnny Bananas but would lay down the big moola on bets with Toby and wouldn't squawk when they lost. It made a nice combo, Miami hood and cafe society bookmaker. So when we got through with the girl last night we went and had a couple of knishes at Ma Salwen's. Then we went across the street and waited for the lab boys to come up with the report on the car."

"The death car," said Bechtel with relish, and McGarr snorted in distaste.

Alicia Prentiss, lovely in a wan sort of way, like Mimi in the last act, made us sit in that room with the big window while she went in to take care of her brother.

"Nursemaid too", McGarr said morosely. "She'd do anything for that guy."

"Even murder—for cash?" I whispered.

"What's the matter with you? You think they can't do murder, just because they live on Sutton Place? Where you been all your

life?"

I didn't think Miss Prentiss, re-entering the room just then, heard him. If she did, she kept it to herself.

"Now, Lieutenant", she said, very composed. "What is it this time?"

"I think we better talk to your brother, Miss Prentiss."

"Impossible. He's been badly hurt."

McGarr was very sturdy about it. "No, Miss Prentiss. I talked to your doctor ten minutes ago and he said your brother was entirely well enough to see me."

"I trust this is your final visit, Lieutenant."

I wanted to pull my coat collar up around the ears as we filed into the bedroom.

Toby Prentiss, strikingly like his sister, with the same white skin, blue eyes and black hair, sat propped up in a bed big as a hayfield. Newspapers were scattered over the sheets and the floor.

"More police!" he exclaimed petulantly. "How long will this go on?"

"There's a couple little matters to straighten out", McGarr said easily, "like fornication and assault. Yeah, you're charged with assault. You reached first."

Prentiss waved his good arm impatiently.

"Then," McGarr went on, taking from his breast pocket a folded paper, "I want you to sign this."

Prentiss opened the paper and with a little frown started to read. Halfway down the first page he began to pale. The handsome face tightened around the jaws. He looked up and said, in a voice that trembled only a little, "Are you crazy?"

"No", McGarr said comfortably. "It's a confession of homicide. You can see it's worded so you won't face a first degree murder rap.

The girl made a choking sound. McGarr kept one wary eye on her and Bechtel moved up to the side of Prentiss' bed.

"You *are* crazy", Prentiss said hoarsely. "Johnny was my friend. We were cleaning up together . . ."

"Uh huh. But you'd lost your shirt once on the horses and you trusted your steady meal ticket, your sister here, a lot more than your deal with Johnny. News of her engagement hit you where it hurts. If your sister married Johnny you wouldn't have your sticky fingers in the management of her business affairs—if it could be called management. I figure that after Bolivar got his comeuppance from your sister he went down to the car, counting on making up with her when she started back downtown. You followed him and told him to forget about any marriage. I can

imagine what Johnny Bolivar would tell you to do. Anyway, you threatened him, and somewhere along the line you pulled that gun on him. For an amateur you're a fast hand with a gun, like in that hotel room with Miami Fats. But Bolivar was pretty quick too. He drilled your shoulder. You did a little better. You were so close the powder marks were all over his face. You grabbed your topcoat from the front seat to cover the blood on your suit. You found Bee-Bo Vane and got her to drive you down to the Marcy. That's just about all it says in that little paper you're going to sign."

Alicia Prentiss moaned and went down in a heap on the floor I got her into a chair, thinking that even with her eyes shut tight she was still a lovely. McGarr kept on talking.

"Bee-Be thought she was finally crashing society, but she tells me she's afraid she's losing her appeal, you were such a perfect gentleman in the hotel room. What she didn't know was that you were nursing a hole in the arm.

Prentiss flung up violently from the bed. Bechtel slammed him back and he lay there panting, with wide scared eyes.

"Don't be a fool", McGarr told him. "To top it off, we've got your gun. Ballistics says the bullet that killed Johnny, the bullet we dug out of Gaunt's window sill, was fired from your gun. And there was even a trace of Johnny's blood type on it. Want to hear any more or d'you want to get it over with? You got self-defense as an out. You'll probably only get ten years and be out in four."

Prentiss closed his eyes. The breath whistled harshly through his clenched teeth but McGarr watched him impatiently. At last Prentiss sat up, very slowly, and when he opened his eyes they were years older.

He whispered, "Give me your pen . . ."

Later, when the police ambulance had taken Prentiss away and his sister had finally succumbed to the sedative, I asked McGarr:

"Is that a new technique?"

"What?" His blue eyes were innocent as a pair of fertilized dice.

"Handing a guy his confession to sign even before you quiz him?"

"A cop's dream", McGarr murmered. "I could afford to try it if he wouldn't sing. We had him wrapped tight."

"You'd never have made a case", I protested, "if the dope hadn't held on to the gun. You couldn't even prove it was murder."

"Sure I could", McGarr said equably. "Did you forget we had

two kinds of blood types in that car? Did you forget Prentiss had four holes in his hide, while Fats hit him with only three? Did Toby deny he was wearing that topcoat to cover up the fourth hole? And don't give me that booshwah about it being *only* circumstantial evidence. It's the best evidence there is. You can knock a confession out of an innocent guy. A cute lawyer can talk witnesses into testifying they saw three moons in the sky last Michaelmas. But you can't fake a blood test or a ballistics test unless you're rigging a frame. And the large impersonal lab of our department does not go in for frames."

"McGarr, you're eloquent."

"I am. You're just a little sore because Maiden Lane has to shell out all that dough. Casey, drive over to Mady Stearns' place. I got to pick up a couple of ducats and tell her we won't arrest her for murder this month."

"What about Alecia?" I asked.

"What about her? she's over twenty-one and she owns a few million bucks but she has to play house with hand-painted punks like Gaunt and Bolivar. You want me to feel sorry for her? She'll probably marry Gaunt on the rebound and it'll serve her right,"

"You're a hard man, McGarr. . ."

"Maybe you're right." He was dead serious. "Maybe I should retire before I get to hate everybody."

THE GREAT REPORT CARD ROBBERY

An interesting robbery took place in a New Jersey High School this Spring. Someone broke into the school guidance office one evening and stole one hundred and fifty of the report cards. As a result, school officials had to delay distribution of all cards until a new set could be prepared.

The principal of the high school was quoted as suspecting that some of the young people had been afraid they wouldn't be allowed to go to the dance at the school that weekend if their parents ever got a look at their grades. Since this now did not happen until after the important evening, the dance was apparently well attended and considered an enormous success.

No comment.

what's new in crime

by Stefan Santesson

WHEN Raymond Austin married Tamar he expected, as have done so many throughout the corridors of time, "to stay married", but he guessed he had expected too much of her. . . . He had found himself, in effect, married not only to her but also to the rather mixed lot of friends who it seemed had been a part of her life. It was only when Tamar Austin was dead, murdered to be precise, that it dawned on her rather stuffy young husband just whom—and what—he had been married to. . . .

It is Jesse Falkenstein, Lesley Egan's unorthodox lawyer-turned-detective in her MY NAME IS DEATH (Harper & Row, $3.95), who plays an important role in this chapter of Raymond Austin's life. A better than good police procedure story, MY NAME IS DEATH also introduces us to some unorthodox and extremely interesting personalities among the folk singers who appeared to have been the main interest, to put it mildly, in the brief life of Tamar Austin.

George Bellairs' DEATH IN THE WASTELAND (London House & Maxwell, $3.50) has to do with the murder of the head of a London Brokerage firm who, it turns out, had been some-

Another report on recent novels in which EQMM *readers may be interested. The writer, editor of this magazine since 1956 and editor of the Unicorn Mystery Book Club during 1945-'52, was awarded the Critic's Edgar (the first since '60) at the 1964 Awards Dinner of the Mystery Writers of America.*

what less than lovable. Likewise a police procedure story, it is the first novel this writer has seen in many years by Bellairs, an oldtimer in this field and popular not only in England but overseas.

Harrigan and Hoeffler are assigned, in Patrick O'Malley's THE AFFAIR OF JOHN DONNE (Mill-Morrow, $3.50), the task of infiltrating—and destroying—a right wing group which it is known has been secretly infiltrated by Communists. As Harrigan points out, "These sportive blooms are watered by the dew of problems so immense that the average citizen, hoping to lift their incubus, simply cannot find a way to cope. Presto! Ultra-conservative groups sprout like crabgrass, waving handy solutions to these knotty riddles." These groups, to again quote Mr. Harrigan, "proliferate faster than rabbits in a fertile year." As their Chief points out when he is briefing Harrigan and Hoeffler, "There is nothing that pleases Moscow more than exerting secret control over a legitimate Far Right organization. By suggestion, by hints, by internal control, such a group can be used to cause more internal dissension in the enemy country than a hundred professional agents. The world saw it work in the '30's, in France, Holland, Norway for example." The pattern is simple. "Gain control of an organization, any organization, and force it unknowingly to foment domestic discord. Rip us apart from within. Set American against American." The assignment of Harrigan and Hoeffler is, bluntly, to wreck the John Donne Society before it succeeds in doing incalculable damage to the country.

Fantastic? Is is really? It is an unfortunate reality that we, essentially an apolitical people (or a community of peoples. . . .), seldom challenge those who claim to have an answer to our socio-political ills. There is ample documentation for the reality that throughout the times which we have known, many basically good and sincere people have been drawn into campaigns and into causes, the control of which it is now known was almost from the beginning seized by men and women who were under orders to do so, until transferred to still other assignments. The tragedy of our times has not been the suborning of the few but the seduction of the many who, in so many instances, were conscious only of the glamour—of the appeal to sacrifice—and of the moral rightness of what they fought for, and others profited from. . . .

THE AFFAIR OF JOHN DONNE should, in other words, not be understood to be an attack on what has come to be

known as the John Birch Society school of thinking. On the contrary. But there has been reason, this past year, to wonder if this *has* not been happening in other fields. The adventures of Harrigan and Hoeffler in the John Donne country, less tongue-in-cheek than the earlier novels aboat these irrepressible specialists, should therefore be read by all of you with, one hopes, considerable interest. And don't smile too much when you are through. . . .

By way of contrast, the possibility that tennis stars of the implied stature of Don Stristor can, for understandable reasons (not political, I hasten to add . . .) become involved with the underworld, will no doubt be dismissed as incredible by those pure in heart who do not read the first pages of their evening newspapers. Unfortunately the basic premise in Ludovic Peters' interesting TWO SETS TO MURDER (Coward McCann, $3.95) does have validity.

Dell Shannon's latest Luis Mendoza mystery, MARK OF MURDER (Morrow, $3.50), is perhaps the most realistic novel of the series about the normally amused—and amusing—Lieutenant Mendoza. These are sound and carefully researched police procedure novels which this writer recommends unreservedly. The coordinated hunt, in MARK OF MURDER, for an apparently purposeless killer, will, I suspect, be remembered some of you for a long time.

Lee Langley's OSIRIS DIED IN AUTUMN (Doubleday, $3.50) deals with the murder of a man whom few of his friends, not even the woman who'd loved him, had ever really known. He had been a man with a past—and this past, it turned out, had reached out into the present and been responsible for his death.

Chief Inspector Martineau has long been one of this writer's favorite detectives. In Maurice Proctor's new novel, TWO MEN IN TWENTY (Harper & Row, $3.95), Martineau has to cope with the activities of a formerly London-based gang who've had to go to ground in Granchester and have begun to operate in their usual manner while there. An excellent police procedure novel.

Samuel Dembo's KALAHARI KILL (Mill-Morrow, $3.95), is the unusually interesting story of the hunt, clear across the Kalahari desert, for a German war criminal whom the intelligence agent concerned has special reasons for wanting to track down—and to kill.

Milo March rides again in M. E. Chaber's latest novel, SIX WHO RAN (Holt-Rinehart-Winston, $3.50). The indestructible insurance investigator, one of the few who seem to have survived into the mid-Sixties without losing some of their earlier zest for life, has to track down the men who've stolen a half-million dollars in cash, securities and bonds, and get this back, or as much of the loot as is possible, to Intercontinental Insurance. Mildly improbable, and uninhibited. And relaxing, as is usually the case with a Chaber novel.

Philip McCutchan's WARMASTER (John Day, $3.95), a Commander Shaw Counterspy novel, is cut from the same cloth. Commander Shaw is on the trail of an organization that naturally has outwitted both the British and American intelligence services. Almost single-handed, in the tradition of certain others in the field, he penetrates the secret headquarters of the organization—is repeatedly on the brink of an extremely unpleasant death—and survives, and wins out, in a series of wildly improbable but admittedly exciting happenings. Definitely good reading. But don't take it all too seriously. . . .

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reunion

by Stephen Dentinger

CAPTAIN LEOPOLD'S office was tucked away at the rear of the second floor in the dingy, smoke-scarred building that served as police headquarters, and perhaps for this reason he was rarely bothered by social callers. The detectives, like Fletcher, who worked under him would occasionally stop in for a chat or a gripe, and when election time neared the politicians came out of their holes. But mostly those who occupied the worn straight-backed chair opposite his desk were there on the most specific of business. They were there because they were suspected of murder.

Harry Tolliver was not a cop or a politician—or, so far as Leopold knew, was he a murderer. He was, actually, a boiler salesman —and Leopold had not seen him in almost twenty-five years.

"You haven't changed a bit," he was saying. "I'd still know you anywhere."

Leopold smiled and offered him a cigarette. "Well, my hair is a bit thinner on top. And I'd hate to think that my middle bulged like this in high school."

Harry Tolliver waved away

Stephen Dentinger returns with another story about Leopold of Homicide — who has been a cop so long that he has developed that sixth sense about what may concern him professionally — the difference between the man whose work is his life, and the man for whom it is just a job.

the cigarette. "Stopped smoking three years ago, when I turned forty. This stuff you read in the papers scares you after a while."

"In my business, Harry, walking down a dark street at night scares you more."

"Yeah. You're head of the homicide squad or something, aren't you?"

Leopold smiled at the popular misconception of his position. "Not really. There's no such thing in this city. It's more of a violent crimes squad, I suppose. But most of the cases do seem to be murders of one sort or another. Let's not talk about me, though. It's a dull subject. What about yourself? What brings you around to see me?" He had a half-day's work waiting, and Harry Tolliver had never been that good a friend, even in high school.

"Well, it's been twenty-five years."

Leopold looked blank. "Since what?"

"Since we graduated from high school. Some of us got together and decided we should have a reunion of the whole class, all the guys and gals."

"Oh?"

"Sure. Sounds great, doesn't it?"

Leopold tried to think back twenty-five years, to recapture those faces and names so buried now in his memory. He'd travelled in different circles during those intervening years—away to college, and the army, and a job with a police department out west, then back east for ten years of marriage that didn't work, until finally he'd found himself a middle-aged captain of detectives, back in his old home town. He liked it here, always had. He liked the breeze off the Sound in the summertime, and even the occasional heavy snows of winter. Perhaps, he sometimes thought, being back home made him feel less lonely—at least until moments like this.

"I don't know how it sounds," he answered frankly.

"We were thinking of a big picnic at Venice Park, just like the old days. Wives and kids and everything."

"I'm afraid I don't have any family to bring."

"Oh. Well, come anyway. It'll be great to see the old crowd. Hell, my kids probably won't even come themselves. They're all in high school now."

"When is this going to be?"

"First Saturday in June, right close to the actual graduation date—just a few days early."

"I'll think about it, Harry."

"Hell, I want you to do more than just *think* about it. I want you to help us find people, contact them."

"Well, I really don't have

much time . . ."

"Sure you do. Look, I brought along my old year-book." He bent to a zipped brief-case and produced from it the slick-papered volume with thickly padded covers which had all but vanished from Leopold's memory. "Remember?"

"I remember."

Harry Tolliver ran his fingers lovingly over the imitation leather with its gold stamping now dulled and blurred by age. "Those were the days, boy! Those really were. So look, what you to do is take a few names—just a dozen or so—and contact the people. Hell, if anyone can find them you should be able to! You're a *detective!*"

"Yeah. Well, you see . . ."

"Come on! For the old crowd!"

Leopold looked into those middle-aged eyes and knew it would be useless to refuse. "All right. Maybe I can call a few people for you."

"Good, good. Look, why don't you take everyone whose name starts with *F* and *G*? There are only thirteen of them."

"Sure. You'd better leave me your book, though. I doubt if I could find mine any more."

Tolliver passed over the book a bit regretfully. "Take good care of it, huh? I wouldn't want anything to happen to it."

Leopold nodded. "I'll see if I can get a list of names typed up from it. Then I can give it back to you."

"Thanks. You'll get right on this? We've only got about five weeks, you know."

"Sure, Harry. Don't you worry about it."

Tolliver stood up and shook hands. "Good to see you again, Leopold, after all these years."

"I'll be in touch with you."

The little man nodded. "Say, when they going to give you a new building? This place is getting pretty shabby."

"Talk to the city council, Harry. They probably think it's pretty plush."

For a time after Tolliver left, Leopold sat alone at his desk, letting the pages flip through his fingers, stopping now and then at some familiar face, some scrawled greeting addressed to Harry Tolliver. The class of George Washington High School, in that good year just before the coming of war.

He remembered how it was, and the memory depressed him.

During the next two days, Leopold ran quickly through eleven of the names on the list he'd made. Eight of them were men whose names were still in the phone book, and a ninth phoneless man was located through the city directory. Two of the women had been tracked down with some help from Tol-

iver, and Leopold had phoned one of them in New York City to convey the invitation. Each phone call was an adventure of sorts, even when he hardly remembered the people. It made him feel old, but he'd never been one to lose his eyes to reality.

The man without a phone was named Jim Groves, and he lived in an apartment on the west side of town. Leopold stopped to see him one sunny afternoon on his way home, and caught him just as he was leaving for the night trick at a nearby factory. Jim Groves in his day had been the star quarterback of the Washington High football team, and even Leopold remembered him well. The man hadn't changed much in twenty-five years.

"Leopold! Sure, I remember you. God, it's been a long time."

They shook hands and Leopold told him quickly about the reunion plans. "Venice Park, the first Saturday in June. And bring the wife and kid if there are any."

Jim Groves was suddenly glum. "They're with her family up in Boston. We're separated."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"One of those things. After all these years she decided she'd married a failure."

"You'll come to the reunion anyway?" Leopold urged. Somewhere along the line he'd caught the fever of the thing.

"Sure. It'll be good to see them all. The team and all. You finding everybody O.K.?"

Leopold glanced at his list. "Harry Tolliver's contacting most of them. I've got all but two on my list. Maybe you know something about them. It'll save me another call to Harry."

"I see a few of them once in a while. Who you looking for?"

"Shirley Fazen . . ."

"Sure. She married Quain, the class president. Remember? Chuck Quain? They live in town somewhere. He went to college and got an engineering job of some sort. They got a big house out in the suburbs."

Leopold made a note. "Thanks. One more—George Fisher."

For a moment, Groves didn't answer. He only looked at Leopold, his face troubled and intent. "Don't you remember? Don't you remember what happened to George Fisher? He drowned on the senior picnic at Venice Park."

"Yes," Leopold said slowly, wondering how he could ever have forgotten that night, even after so many years. "I never knew him well, and his picture was in the year-book. I forgot it was him."

"Sure," Groves went on. "The year-books were already out by that time. I remember we were all signing them at the picnic.

Poor George! You know, I always thought there was something funny about his death. I always thought maybe somebody pushed him out of that boat."

"It was a long time ago," Leopold answered carefully.

"Yeah. Well, I gotta get to work before that whistle blows. Keep me informed on the plans and I'll be there."

"All right," Leopold answered.

"Poor George," Groves mused as he turned away. Then, as an afterthought, he asked, "What are you doing these days, anyway, Leopold? You were always the brains of the class."

"I'm with the city, Jim," Leopold answered, starting down the stairs. "I'm a detective."

Chuck and Shirley Quain had made it big. Their house perched on top of a small hill, just a bit higher than the others in the suburban subdivision, and to Leopold's untrained eye it appeared to be in the fifty thousand dollar class. As he climbed out of the car he wished he'd worn a better necktie.

They remembered him, because he'd "hardly changed at all," and he remembered them. Shirley Fazen had been the best-looking girl in the senior class, and looking at her in the doorway Leopold could still remember why. Her cheer-leading at the fooball games had been a major attraction, and even the somewhat dull swimming meets were well attended by boys anxious for a look at Shirley Fazen in a bathing suit.

Leopold was a bit surprised to find that she'd married Chuck Quain. He'd been elected president of the senior class after a hard-fought, dirty campaign that seemed to mark him as a future politician but little else. The house on the hill showed that he'd made it to something else, but Leopold couldn't help wondering if he was still using the same tactics.

"Come in, come in," Quain urged. "You remember Shirley, surely. Ha, ha!" That must have been his favourite joke. "Drink? Scotch, rye, rum, vodka, anything you name. We live the good life out here." Behind him, the setting sun was streaking through a window, turning his grey hair momentarily reddish.

Leopold followed them into a sunken living-room a bit too full of the good life. "You have a nice place here," he managed to say.

"We like it." Quain lit a cigar without offering one to Leopold. "How about that drink, or are you on duty?"

"I see you've kept up on me more than I have on you."

"How could I miss? Every time there's a murder Captain Leopold gets his name in the

papers. Isn't that right, Shirley?"

She nodded agreement and came over to perch on the arm of Leopold's chair. She was wearing tight orange pants that did youthful things for her figure, and Leopold had to remind himself that she too must now be forty-three years old. "But I don't imagine the Captain's here on business," she purred. "Are you, Captain? I'll bet it's about the big reunion. Harry Tolliver has already talked to Chuck about it."

Leopold smiled up at her. "Then my trip was for nothing."

"Not if you'll take a drink."

"All right," he said with a sigh. "Scotch and water—but just one."

Chuck Quain produced the drink from a little bar at one end of the living-room. "The good life does have its drawbacks," he said. "The kids are getting old enough now to sneak a swig of the booze when we're not around. But I guess that's the only way to learn about it. I guess I did things like that myself when I was young."

"You're an engineer, aren't you?" Leopold asked.

"That's right. That's where the money is, these days, I could tell you . . ."

"Chuck, no shop talk, please. We haven't seen him for twenty-five years! I want to hear about this reunion, anyway."

"You probably know as much as I do, from Tolliver. He's the one who roped me in on it. Venice Park's the place, right where we had our senior class picnic."

"Yeah," Chuck muttered. "I remember that."

"Funny thing, I'd completely forgotten about George Fisher drowning that day. I stopped by to see Jim Groves this afternoon and he reminded me."

"It's not the sort of thing you like to remember," Shirley said.

"But the three of us were right there when it happened," Leopold said. "I can remember it now as if it were just yesterday. You saw him fall in, didn't you, Chuck?"

Quain nodded. "I got there a minute later, anyway. I was taking the canoe back to the boathouse, and I guess he was doing the same thing. He was always ahead of me on the creek, just around the bend, when I heard a yell and a splash. He'd fallen out of the damned canoe and was thrashing around in the water. God, it was awful!"

"Then why talk about it?" Shirley asked. "It was awful for all of us. I was practically engaged to George at the time."

"You helped pull him out, didn't you?" Leopold asked.

She nodded. "Some of us had been swimming earlier, and I still had my suit on. We heard

Chuck yelling for help and came running. It was pitch dark, of course, but he shouted that George had capsized his canoe and gone under. A bunch of us dived in, and finally we found him. Not in time, though."

The details were growing more vivid in Leopold's memory as she spoke. He'd never been a good swimmer himself, and the black of the water had been too frightening that night. But he remembered running to one of the footpath bridges directly above the tragic spot, remembered looking down with flashlights playing over the water as Shirley and someone else pulled the body onto the grassy bank of the creek. The place was called Venice Park because of these creeks and footbridges, and it was a perfect setting for picinics and canoeing—a bit of Venice in New York State. For the most part, the creeks were barely six or seven feet deep, hardly enough to be very dangerous. That night, though, they'd been dangerous—deadly—to George Fisher. They'd worked over him for an hour before admitting what they all must have known. He was dead, and the senior picnic had been ended by sudden tragedy.

"Who else helped you pull him out, anyway?" Leopold asked.

"I think it was Jim Groves."

Leopold nodded. "I thought it might have been. Funny he didn't mention it today."

"What *did* he say about it?" Chuck Quain asked.

"Oh, nothing really. Just that he thought there might have been something funny. Something not quite right."

Shirley Quain laughed. "Are you going to make a murder case out of it after all these years, Captain?"

He joined her with a chuckle. "Hardly."

Chuck studied the damp end of his cigar. "It would be too late now anyway, wouldn't it? After twenty-five years?"

"Well, there's no statute of limitations on murder, if that's what you mean."

"Let's find a pleasanter subject," Shirley suggested. "How about another drink, Captain?"

"No, no. I really have to be going. I didn't mean to be talking shop either. Just wanted to tell you about the reunion."

"Do you think under the circumstances that Venice Park is a very good place to have it?" Chuck asked.

Leopold got to his feet. "I'll bring up the point with Harry Tolliver. He might have forgotten about Fisher too."

"Everyone seems to have."

Leopold nodded. "Everyone but Jim Groves. He still remember it."

That night, later, Leopold phoned Harry Tolliver at his home. The man was a bit overly jovial, as if he might have been driking. "Hi, boy! How you doing? Did you reach everyone?"

"All but George Fisher. He's dead."

"George . . . Oh, sure. I didn't know his name was on the list."

"Harry?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you think we should consider moving the reunion to some other location? Venice Park might bring back unpleasant memories."

"Why? What do you mean?"

"Well, Fisher and all."

"Everybody's forgotten that."

"Some people haven't. Some people even think his death might not have been accidental."

"*What?* God, Leopold, stop letting that badge go to your head! I asked you to call a few people, that's all."

"Sorry." Leopold hung up and lit a cigarette. For a long time he sat staring at the frosted glass of his office door. What was it? Was he just trying to be a big man with his former classmates? Was he overdoing the detective bit? He was forty-three years old—hardly a child any more. He'd forget about the thing. Right now!

But the next afternoon he went to see Jim Groves again.

Groves was blinking sleepy eyes as he opened the door. "Hey! We don't see each other for twenty-five years, and then bingo—two days in a row!"

"Sorry to bother you again," Leopold said.

"Come on in. I got some cold beer in the icebox."

"No thanks. I just wanted to ask you something. Jim. Yesterday you said something about George Fisher's death. You said you thought someone may have pushed him out of that boat. Why?"

"You're working now, aren't you? You're going to solve the damn thing after twenty-five years!"

"If there's anything to solve. It was a long time ago."

"There's something to solve, all right. Fisher was never much of a swimmer, but the damned creek was only ten feet wide!"

"How deep?"

"Six feet, maybe. He could almost have walked out."

"But he didn't."

"Darn right he didn't! Because somebody pushed him out of the canoe."

"Somebody walking on the water?"

"Maybe somebody in another canoe," Groves answered.

Leopold lit a cigarette. "You've got quite a memory. What else do you remember? Who else had a canoe out that night?"

"Quain. Chuck. Quain was right behind him when it happened"

"Were they friends?"

"That's hard to say." He went into the kitchen for a moment and returned with a frosty bottle of beer. "Hard to say. They both were hot for that Shirley Fazen. I remember the football games when she used to cheer. She was really built."

"Wasn't just about everybody hot for Shirley, as I remember it?"

"Yeah, I guess so. Even me, once."

"Was George with Shirley that day?"

"Not too much as I remember it. He had this other chick on the string. Marge Alguard. Remember her?"

"Vaguely. Short girl, dark hair?"

"That's the one."

"What's she doing these days?"

"I don't think she ever got married. I see her around town once in a while. She works at one of the department stores."

"Thanks a lot, Jim. You've got quite a memory."

"Listen, if you've got some time, let me tell you about one or two of my best games. Remember the time I ran eighty-five yards for a touchdown against Tech?"

"I remember, Jim. Maybe I can come again some time and we can talk about it. Right now you'd better start getting ready for work."

"What? Yeah, it is getting late." He downed the rest of his beer. "See you around. In June if not before."

"Sure." Leopold left him there, feeling vaguely sorry for Jim Groves, feeling that nobody should be cursed with that good a memory of the better days.

Marge Alguard's name didn't start with *F* or *G*, but Leopold went to see her anyway. He found her working behind the candy counter of the city's largest department store, scooping multi-coloured jelly beans into little plastic bags. Easter was only a few weeks past, and he imagined this was the unsold remainder. He found himself wondering if they melted down the chocolate rabbits, too.

"Pardon me. Miss Alguard?"

"Yes?" She still had a pleasant smile, though she was too obviously a woman in her forties.

"You probably don't remember me after all these years. My name's Leopold and I went to high school with you."

She hesitated a moment and then her tiny face lit up. "Why yes, I remember you! How *are* you?"

"Fine. I'd like to talk to you a few minutes if I could. Do

you get a coffee break or anything?"

"I'm in charge of the department," she answered with a superior smile, signalling to one of the other girls. "I'd be happy to have coffee with you. I see so few of the old crowd any more."

Over coffee in the store's gaudy restaurant they talked of old times and people they'd known, and finally after a decent interval of casualness Leopold asked her, "Remember George Fisher? The fellow that drowned at the senior picnic?"

"Oh yes, George Fisher." Her eyes seemed suddenly to blur.

"I was thinking about that day, trying to figure what really happened. You were with George, weren't you?"

"Not when he died."

"No, no. I meant earlier."

"It's so hard to remember. Twenty-five years next month. You know, Harry Tolliver called me the other day about a class reunion."

"I know."

"Yes, I guess I was with George most of that day. I remember he rented the canoe and we paddled all over the park, up and down those creeks and streams, under the bridges, through the branches of the trees where they touched the water."

"Then what happened?"

"Oh, I don't know. We rested for a time on the bank. I remember how nice the grass was, how soft. Then it was dark and he said he had to return the canoe. I never saw him alive again. I heard the shouting and ran down and saw them trying to revive him. It was horrible."

Leopold wanted to leave her in peace, but there was one other question he had to ask. "When . . . when you rested on the bank, did he kiss you, neck with you?"

"Say, what is this?" Her blurred eyes were suddenly sharp with suspicion. "Why are you asking me all these questions?"

"I'm looking into Fisher's death."

"Are you a cop or something?"

"It's not an official investigation," he said quickly, but he saw that he had already lost her. He had gone too far with his casual questions. She finished her coffee and hurried back to the candy counter with hardly a good-bye.

Leopold sighed and ordered a second cup of coffee. He should forget the thing, then and there. Nothing good could come of what he was doing. He was just stirring up a lot of memories better left buried after twenty-five years. At times he had too much of the detective's mentality—the ability to see evil where no evil lurked. Perhaps this was one of those times.

That night Harry Tolliver—an alarmed Harry Tolliver—phoned

Leopold at his apartment. His voice over the telephone had lost now all of the friendly charm he'd tried to show that first day.

"Leopold, what in hell are you trying to do?"

"About what?"

"You know. George Fisher. You've got everybody all upset."

"Oh? Who?"

"Marge Alguard, just to name one. She found out you were with the police and she's scared half out of her wits. What did you ask her, anyway?"

"Nothing special."

"Her name wasn't on your list, even. What in hell are you trying to stir up?"

"Just the truth."

"After twenty-five years there isn't any truth, only memories. Stop bothering these people. Stop bothering *me*!"

"You?"

"I want this reunion to be a success. You think anyone'll show up if you turn it into a murder investigation?"

"No one's mentioned murder. No one till now."

"Look, just forget I ever approached you about the reunion. Forget everything, huh?"

"That's difficult to do at this point. Memories linger."

Tolliver hung up in disgust. Leopold felt a bit sorry for the man, as he did for most people, but the thing was almost out of his hands. He had the decided feeling that wheels had been set in motion, wheels which could not now be stopped until they had ground exceedingly fine.

That night Leopold's dreams were troubled, and he awoke at the first hint of dawn with a cool layer of sweat covering his body. By some trick of memory he was back there, back on that stone bridge over the creek, remembering it all as clearly as if it were yesterday. Yes, the lights playing on the water, the wet stone beneath his hands as he clutched the parapet and peered down; it was all too vividly clear. There was Shirley Quain — Shirley Fazen then—the bathing suit clinging to her strong young form, helping to pull the limp, sodden body from the water. And there too was Jim Groves, aiding her, though his clothes were soaked and his shoes lost somewhere in the creek.

Leopold came suddenly awake. Jim Groves, for all his remarkable memory, had not mentioned to Leopold that he'd helped recover Fisher's body from the creek. Why not? Was it simply that he hadn't been asked?

Leopold rolled out of bed and dressed quickly. He wanted to get down to headquarters, away from his thoughts, away from the memories. When he reached his desk he rang for Fletcher and

asked at once for an account of the night's activities.

"Morning report's not ready yet," Fletcher said. "What's the trouble this morning, Captain?"

Leopold ran a hand over his eyes. "I don't know. Talk to me about something, will you? What about that jewel robbery yesterday?"

Fletcher's smile broadened. "We cracked that one. The bird they grabbed outside the building finally confessed."

"What did he do with the diamond rings?"

"Damnedest thing you ever heard of! He's got a girl friend working in the building and he had it set up that she'd leave her office and go down for coffee at exactly three o'clock. He staged the robbery when he saw her coming back along the hallway with her paper cup full of coffee. As he ran by her he just dropped the rings into the coffee and kept going. It was perfect."

"Not quite perfect, Leopold said.

"What?"

"You caught him."

"Yeah, but if he hadn't broken down and talked we'd never have gotten wise to the way he worked it."

The conversation depressed Leopold. Everything seemed to depress him. "Fletcher, perfect crimes can become an obsession with detectives sometimes. I wonder if that's happening to me."

"What's the trouble, Captain?"

"Twenty-five years ago an eighteen-year-old boy drowned at Venice Park during a class picnic. I was practically a witness to the thing. Now I'm wondering about it, wondering if someone might have killed him."

"Take my advice and forget it, Captain. We have enough new murders coming in every day without worrying about anything that old."

Leopold sighed and swivelled around to look out the window. These first few days in May were always among his favourites, a special time when the earth seemed alive again not just with spring but with an electric impulse to accomplish the strident tasks of winter. Perhaps it was the weather that was against him this day. "Fletcher, I value your opinion, but I just can't accept it. Go down to the records room and dig me out what they's got on this drowning, will you?"

"*How* long ago did you say it was?"

"Twenty-five years next month, but we must have something on it. The boy's name was George Fisher. He was a senior at Washington High."

"That stuff's probably in the basement, under a ton of dust."

"See what you can find,"

Leopold said. "Just to humour me."

Fletcher was gone for the better part of an hour, and when he returned his brow was streaked with a line of dust. He collapsed into Leopold's straight-backed chair and blew more dust from a thin legal-sized folder. "I hope you're satisfied, Captain."

Leopold smiled through tight lips. "I don't think anything could satisfy me today. What've you got?"

"Who knows?" I only hope the paper hasn't all crumbled into dust. Weren't they talking about putting all this old stuff on microfilm?"

"They'll do that about the same time they give us a new building," Leopold said. He was now suddenly anxious to see these old reports, anxious to delve into this page from his past. He wondered if somewhere on these pages his own name might even appear, like a ghostly vision of another, forgotten life. "What've you got, Fletcher?"

"Not too much, really. Let's see—autopsy report, statements by some of the kids, and the report of the investigating detective."

"Detective?" Leopold sat up straighter in his chair. "Why a detective?"

"Don't know. Nothing to indicate why, but apparently they thought something was funny at first."

"Yeah. The autopsy—what were the findings?"

"Death by drowning. Nothing irregular there."

"Any other marks or wounds on the body?"

"Not a thing. Some hair pulled out, but that probably happened when they tried to rescue him."

Leopold stared off into space. "Do you have a statement by Chuck Quain there?"

Fletcher flipped through the papers. "Here it is . . . He was in a canoe about a hundred feet behind Fisher. It was dark, but there was an occasional moon through the clouds. He hadn't been with Fisher, but had seen him earlier in the boat with a girl named Marge Alguard . . ."

Leopold nodded. "What about the drowning?"

". . . Well, Quain heard a yell and a splash from around a bend in the creek. By the time he reached the spot, he saw Fisher struggling in the water. Quain couldn't swim, and hesitated about going in after him. He shouted for help, and some of the others came running. It was hard to see anything, and by that time Fisher had gone under for good. But after a movement or two Shirley Fazen and Jim Groves found him and pulled him out. They applied artificial respiration, but it was too late."

"What are the other statements?"

"Let's see . . . Shirley Fazen—she was the only one who still had her bathing suit on, and she was the first to reach the creek and go in after Fisher. But she couldn't find him until Groves joined her after a moment. He was fully dressed, but he dived in anyway and they pulled Fisher out together."

"What did Groves say?"

"About the same thing. He'd been swimming earlier in the evening with Shirley Fazen, and she stayed in the water while he dried off and got dressed. This was at a pool about a hundred yards from the creek. The first thing he knew he heard Quain shouting for help and he started to run towards the sound. He dived into the creek and found that Shirley was already there, searching for Fisher. They found him together."

"Is Marge Alguard mentioned anywhere?"

"In Quain's statement."

"Yeah. Anywhere else?"

"Here's a very brief statement by her, just to the effect that she'd been in the canoe with Fisher earlier."

"How about Harry Tolliver?"

Fletcher skimmed over the last remaining sheet of paper. "Nothing on him. This is just the detective's conclusions."

"That should be interesting."

"It should be, but it isn't. He figures Fisher was standing up in the canoe and fell in. That's all."

"Why would he stand up?"

Fletcher shrugged. "Beats me." He fumbled for a cigarette and lit it. "But then I can't figure out why you're so interested in making this a murder, Captain."

"Shouldn't I be? Isn't it my job?"

"After all this time?"

"If it was murder then, it's still murder today."

Fletcher frowned into the cigarette smoke, blue against the morning sunshine filtering through the dirty window. "Yeah. But if it's murder, then you could be one of the suspects yourself."

Leopold blinked. He hadn't really thought of that.

In the afternoon he called again at the candy counter where Marge Alguard worked. He waited patiently while she conducted business with three tiny children, then stepped into her line of vision.

"You again" she said between tight lips. "I don't want any coffee today, thanks."

"I just wanted to ask you a question."

"Didn't you ask enough already?"

"Maybe not the right ones. That day in the park—did you have a fight with Fisher for any reasons?"

She stepped very close to him, so no one else could hear her words. "Look, get out of here. Get out of here with your dirty little questions! What's the trouble—trying to get your kicks this way? You were never much with the girls back in school, were you?"

"Marge . . ."

"No, I didn't have a fight with George that day. That day was about the happiest in my life, until he died, and your questions aren't going to turn it into something dirty. I don't have much to remember any more, at my age, but I remember George Fisher."

There was nothing more for Leopold to say, except, "I'm sorry. I won't bother you again." He went away, wondering if he'd already bothered too many lives with his needless prying. Perhaps it didn't really make any difference, after all these years.

That night, under a clear but moonless sky, a brick fell from the roof of Leopold's apartment building as he was entering, just missing his head. It might have been toppled by the wind, except that there was no wind. He hurried to the roof with his revolver drawn, but there was nothing to be seen. Down in the back alley, at the foot of the fire escape, he caught a split-second glimpse of a running man, who vanished around a corner. Leopold slept the rest of the night with the gun under his pillow, something he'd never done before.

Fletcher turned the unmarked police car into Venice Park, narrowly avoiding a group of bicycling teenagers on a day's outing. "A Saturday in May," he said, not unkindly. "Brings 'em all out."

Leopold was smoking an old pipe he'd resurrected that morning from his dresser drawer. He watched the kids on their bicycles until they were out of sight around a curve, then said, "I guess that's what parks are for."

"That, and lovers after dark, and may be sometimes a killing or two."

They crossed a stone bridge over one of the creeks and Leopold asked him to stop. "It was in this area somewhere, I'm sure. The swimming pool's still just over there."

"I thought you said it was a footbridge."

"It was, then. But times change." He opened the door on his side and slid out. "Let's walk a while, Fletcher. It's a nice day."

The detective fell into step at his side. "You really think one of them tried to kill you last night, Captain?"

"It's hard to say. I've acquired a good many enemies in my life.

But this is the only thing I've really been working on all week." And even that thought troubled him. Would he have devoted so much time to the drowning of George Fisher in a week when a major murder or two had occurred? Weren't they all mere victims of time and circumstance, ultimately?

Fletcher lit a cigarette. "I had a couple of the boys check the roof this morning like you suggested, but they didn't come up with anything. Not even an old butt."

Leopold felt a sudden surge of excitement. They'd crossed a gravelled path which led from the direction of the pool to a narrow stone bridge over the creek. "This is it, Fletcher. I'm sure?"

He remembered it now as if the events had happened only yesterday. There was the bridge, with its engraved metal plaque in tribute to the W.P.A., its carefully placed stones now showing the wear of some thirty years' travel by foot and cycle. Leopold stood in the very centre and looked down once more into the dark waters below.

Fletcher climbed down the grassy bank to the water's edge and took out a twelve-foot tape measure. He tossed one end to Leopold and watched the point where the other end, weighted by its round metal case, cut the water. "O.K., Captain. Nine feet from the top of the bridge to the water."

"How far from the bottom? How much clearance is there?"

Fletcher stretched his long body out over the water, clinging to a jutting stone with one precarious handhold. "I make it just under six feet. Maybe about five-ten."

Leopold nodded. "So if he'd been standing in the canoe he might have hit his head going under."

"Who stands in canoes?"

"People who get drowned. Did you check on the detective who wrote that original report?"

Fletcher nodded. "He retired seven years ago and moved to Florida. Died a couple years back."

"He probably wouldn't have remembered it anyway," Leopold decided. "Just a drowning. Toss your measure into the water and see how deep we are at this point, Fletcher."

The detective joined Leopold on the bridge and they played out the full twelve feet. By leaning far over the edge Fletcher was able to touch bottom. "It's around six feet," he said finally after some quick mathematics. "Deep enough to drown in."

"Fisher was tall. Just about that tall. Why didn't he just walk to shore. It's only a few feet."

"He panicked in the dark.

People do, you know. Maybe it was deeper then."

Leopold shook his head. "These creeks rise in the spring, but by June it would be lower than it is now."

"Maybe he hit his head, like you suggested. Knocked himself out."

"But the autopsy showed no marks on his head. And Chuck Quain's story had him struggling in the water, obviously conscious."

"Well, what then?"

Leopold was running his hand over the smooth dry stone of the bridge, remembering something from long ago. "Fletcher, what do we have back in the car that's big enough to make a splash?"

"Huh?"

"Something . . . the spare tyre! Get the spare tyre, will you?"

Moments later, Fletcher returned with a puzzled frown, rolling the tyre before him. "You're sure this is what you want, Captain?"

"It'll have to do," Leopold answered with a smile, "unless you'd like to jump in."

"No thanks, Captain. Say, what are you up to, anyway?"

Leopold was lifting the tyre to the stone ledge. "Just trying something, Fletcher." He let the tyre fall, then watched as the water splashed up in return. "See if you can fish it out for me and we'll try once more."

Fletcher broke a thin branch off a nearby tree and used it to coax the floating tyre in to shore. "I hope you know what you're doing."

Leopold tapped his pipe against the stone while he waited. "I suppose it will be good to see them all again at the reunion," he mused. "Funny how the years separate us so much, by occupation and economics. Back in those days I don't think we were so different. But now I'm a detective, and Harry Tolliver is a salesman, and Marge Alguard is a clerk. Shirley married Chuck Quain, and he's a successful engineer. Groves is a factory worker."

"And Fisher's dead."

"Yes, and Fisher's dead. I guess that's life. Some of us get happy and some of us get dead." He let the tyre fall again, but the splash was no greater than the first time.

"Satisfied, Captain?"

"Satisfied. I wanted to see if the water could splash up to the top of this railing. It can't."

"What does that prove?"

Leopold shrugged and said nothing. It was too soon for answers, even after twenty-five years.

Later in the day, he had still another phone call from the increasingly distraught Mr. Harry Tolliver. "Look, Leopold," he

began without preamble, "some of us are having a meeting tonight about the reunion. We'd like you to come."

"Where?"

"Chuck Quain's place. We want to get things out in the open, find out just what you're up to."

Leopold sighed into the mouthpiece. "All right, I'll be there. What time?"

"A little after eight."

At eighty-thirty that evening, Leopold turned his car into the Quain driveway once more, and was surprised to see only one other vehicle ahead of him. The meeting, he soon discovered, had so petered out that only the Quains and Tolliver and Marge Alguard were present, all looking quite unhappy.

Shirley Quain, wearing the same orange slacks, served him a martini that he didn't really need, and he settled down into an uncomfortable purple chair opposite Marge. He wondered if it was a sign of the new sophistication to serve martinis this late in the evening. "This all that's coming?" he asked.

"I asked Jim Groves, but he's working," Tolliver mumbled.

Reminded of Groves' night job, Leopold wondered if he had been there the previous evening. He didn't really need to check, though. He thought he knew who'd tried to kill him. "Well, what seems to be the problem?"

"You, I guess," Chuck Quain answered, not quite managing a laugh. "Marge here says she won't come to the reunion because of the questions you've been asking, and some of the others feel the same way."

"Oh?"

"I told you to lay off," Tolliver said.

"I was going to, but something changed my mind."

"You really think George Fisher was . . . killed?" This question came from Shirley Quain, who'd just returned from the kitchen with another tray full of cocktails.

"I think he was killed, yes. I think the police were suspicious at the time, but they were unable to prove anything."

"You can prove something?" Tolliver asked.

"I don't know."

"But you intend to continue this foolish investigation?" Quain had left his chair to begin pacing the floor. He reminded Leopold of a caged tiger waiting to be fed.

"I intend to continue," he said. "In fact, I'm going out to Venice Park when I leave here, just to refresh my memory of things."

"At night?" Shirley Quain questioned, somewhat startled.

"It happened at night," he answered. The thing had occurred to him on the spur of the mo-

ment, then the words were out almost before he realized it. All right, he was saying to one of them, come and get me.

If he was wrong, if it was Jim Groves after all, then there was no harm done. He downed his drink and made motions towards leaving.

"Wait a minute!" Harry Tolliver insisted. "We haven't settled anything. What about the reunion?"

"Count me out," Marge said. "I've had enough questions and prying about the past."

"See what I'm up against?" Tolliver pleaded. "Nobody'll come, the way things are."

"I'm sorry," Leopold told him. And he was sorry. Not for the reunion, but for Harry Tolliver.

Leopold waited for an hour at the edge of the creek, lounging up against the stone coldness of the bridge as he smoked his pipe and waited for death to visit him, to brush up against his flesh. He had no doubt that the man would try again, but somehow as the hour grew into two his supreme confidence began to fade. Perhaps he couldn't get away from the meeting, or perhaps Leopold had been wrong. What if it had been Jim Groves after all, or someone else?

As the second hour neared its end, he knocked the glowing embers of his pipe into the muddy creek and started to leave. It was then that he became aware of the dark figure standing near a tree some twenty feet away. A chill of antipication ran down his spine. "Hello, there," he said. "I've been waiting for you."

Chuck Quain stepped out of the shadows, letting the pale lights of night fall full across his face. "You knew I'd come?"

"I knew."

"I've got a gun this time," Quain said, and Leopold saw the weapon flash in the moonlight.

"It's better than a brick, but I don't think you'll use it."

"Why not?"

"Because you're not a murderer. Because killing me won't keep your wife's secret. It was Shirley who killed George Fisher, all those years ago. Wasn't it?"

Chuck Quain never even noticed when Leopold signalled Fletcher to come out of his hiding place. He was suddenly like a man with the life crushed from his body, and he offered no resistance when they took the gun from his hand.

"Let's go back to the car," Leopold suggested. "We can talk there."

"How did you know about Shirley? How?"

When they reached the car, Leopold signalled Fletcher to switch on the tape recorder.

They could get Quain's signature on a statement later. "Memories, I think. Memories and a lot of guessing. It was fantastic that Fisher could have drowned so quickly in that shallow creek, unless he was unconscious. And yet there was no bump on his head and we had your own statement that he'd been struggling in the water. Was there another possibility? Yes. Someone could have held him under the water."

Chuck Quain shivered with a sudden chill, or perhaps a memory. "After all these years," he said simply.

"Now, was there any confirming evidence of this theory?" Leopold went on. "There was. Fisher's hair—some of it had been pulled out. He'd spent the whole evening with Marge Alguard and she hadn't done it, so who had? It might have happened when they pulled him from the water, but I doubted if they'd use that violence in the act of rescuing a man. It seemed more likely to me that a murderer had held Fisher under the water by the hair, until he drowned. The next question was *who?* And I remembered that Shirley Fazen had been Fisher's girl, although he spent the day of the picnic with Marge. It could have been a motive."

Fletcher stirred in the back seat and lit a cigarette. Outside, the night was very quiet.

"When I began piecing together Shirley's movements for that evening in my own mind, I came up with something a bit odd. She'd been swimming with Jim Groves, and he'd left her in the pool. Apparently no one saw her leave it, but next thing we know she's in the creek with Fisher's body. And you, Chuck, were the only one who claimed to have seen her dive in after him. If someone did hold Fisher underwater by the hair until he drowned, it almost had to be one of his would-be rescuers. Either Shirley Fazen or Jim Groves."

"Why?" That was all. Just *why.*

"Because the murderer must have gotten soaked through to the skin, and nobody else would have been wet. They'd all gotten dressed except Shirley. And then somewhere along the line I remembered something from that evening, something buried in my own memory. When I stood on that stone bridge and watched them pulling Fisher from the water, the railing of the bridge was wet—not damp but actually wet. It hadn't rained, there was a moon that night and only a few clouds. And Fisher's struggles couldn't have splashed water up that far. No, it was wet because the killer had perched there before leaping down onto George Fisher's unsuspecting head as he passed under the bridge in his

canoe. But Jim Groves had just put on dry clothes. Everyone else had on dry clothes. Only Shirley was still in her bathing suit, and just out of the pool. Only Shirley could have left wet stones behind on the bridge when she dropped onto Fisher's canoe."

"It wasn't really like that," Chuck Quain said, and his words were almost a moan. "She didn't plan it. She saw him taking the canoe back and ran to the bridge in the darkness. She was sitting there, with her feet dangling over the edge, when he paddled along. They said a few words. She asked about Marge Alguard and he made a statement that infuriated her—something about Marge being better at necking. Shirley just . . . just jumped on him. I don't think she ever meant to kill him."

Leopold sighed into the darkness. It might have been twenty-five years ago. This, right now, was their reunion. "And you came along and saw it. And kept her secret all these years. Is that why she married you, Chuck? Did you blackmail her into marriage?"

But that question would never be answered. His mind and memory were still back there by the creek. "She didn't know her own strength," he said, almost to himself now. "She was so at home in the water, on the swimming team, that she didn't realize Fisher was almost helpless in her hands. She was a strong girl. She still is."

"We'll have to go see her," Leopold said quietly.

"Yes." Then, "What do you intend to do?"

"I don't know. I just don't know."

He knew too well that it would be an impossible case to prove. How many could remember Shirley in the water that night? How many could have said even then, in the confusion of darkened events, whether she was rescuer or murderer? All Leopold had was Chuck Quain's statement, and the fact that their guilty secret had nearly turned Chuck into a killer himself.

In a book, they would have found her a suicide when they returned to the house on the hill. But instead there was only a haggard woman of forty-three coming down the stairs, looking suddenly old—as if the mere sight of Leopold had told her all she needed to know.

"One of the children was crying," she said simply to them both. "He was having a nightmare."

(Continued from Other Side)

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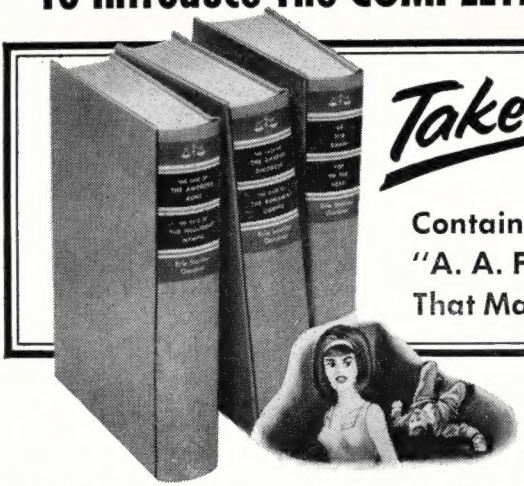

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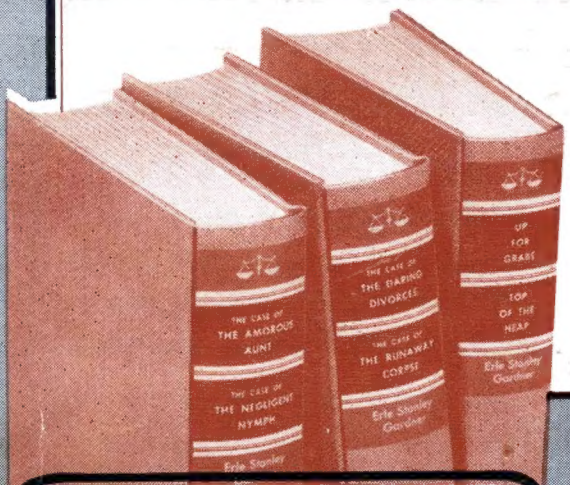

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